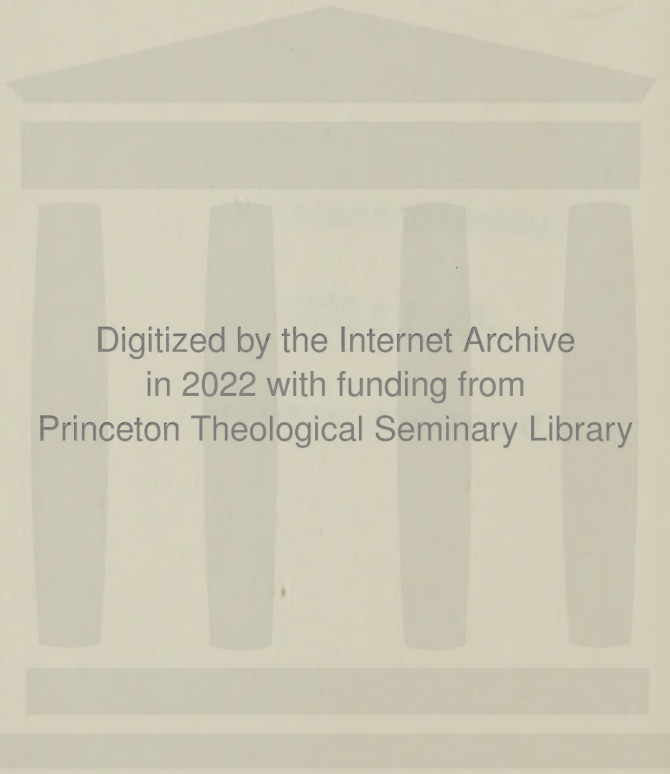


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THE APOLOGETICS
OF
THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

BY THE LATE
✓
WILLIAM M. HETHERINGTON, D.D., LL.D.,
PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY, FREE CHURCH COLLEGE,
GLASGOW.

With an Introductory Notice

BY
ALEXANDER DUFF, D.D., LL.D.

EDINBURGH:
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1867.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.



HAVING been acquainted with the late Dr. Hetherington for nearly thirty years,—having admired his talents, his erudition, and varied accomplishments,—having enjoyed much of his confidence and friendship,—and having been requested by one to whom his memory must ever be the most precious of legacies, to write a short preface or introductory notice to his posthumous work on *The Apologetics of the Christian Faith*, I could not decline responding to the request, however strongly I might have desired that the honourable task had been committed to other and more competent hands.

It has often been noticed in the works of creation, that beside the bane is uniformly to be found the antidote. Of the truth of this remark, the animal and vegetable kingdoms would at once furnish many striking illustrative examples. The evolutions of Providence in the history of individuals, societies, and empires, would also supply their full quota of corroborative attestation. But it is in the kingdom of grace that the most conspicuous exemplifications may be found. Boldly may we ask, When or where, during the last eighteen hundred years, has the poison of infidelity insinuated itself in the shape of doubt, or cavil, or scoffing objection to the Bible as the only authoritative revelation from God, without the healing balm or corrective being instantly provided, in the form of a cutting exposure, a triumphant reply, or fresh cumulative evidence of irresistible force?

At the beginning of last century, the frigid and withering deism of Herbert, Hobbes, Blount, Galon, Toland, Shaftesbury, Collins, Woolston, Tindal, and Bolingbroke, threatened not only to benumb, but utterly to consume the very life of Christianity through the wide realms of Christendom. “It has come,” wrote Bishop Butler in 1736, “I know not how, to be

taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if in the present age this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." It was this light and deriding state of the public mind which evoked the immortal *Analogy of Religion*, with its unanswered and unanswerable train of argument.

At a later period, the more subtle and philosophical scepticism of Hume called forth the slashing exposures of Campbell and Beattie, subsequently followed by the still more profound and convincing replies of Chalmers and other redoubted champions of the faith; while Judge Hailes and other eminent men laid bare the historical sophistries and malicious sarcasms of Gibbon; and Paley, with rare felicity and tact, abbreviated and popularized the massive and voluminous demonstrations of Lardner.

But it is needless to enlarge on this subject. Suffice it to say, that no sooner was a blow levelled at the credit of revealed religion from any quarter, whether directed by the keen philosophism of a Hume, or the low buffoonery of a Paine, than it was instantly parried, repelled, and made to recoil with deadly effect on the breast of him who aimed it. It was this uniform result, redounding to the honour and unshaken strength of Christianity, which prompted Dr. Gerard of Aberdeen to write his admirable dissertation, entitled, *Christianity Confirmed by the Opposition of Infidels*. "It is," says he, in his preface, "by such friction as seems at first sight likely to break it, that the diamond is polished and receives its lustre. In like manner it is, by being fretted, as it were, that truth is made to show the full brightness of its evidence. The trial distinguishes the true gem from the supposed one, which in the lump promised, perhaps, as fair as it. And plausible falsehoods are often as well received as real truths, till both have been subjected to an exact and severe examination; but the opposition of argument overturns the former, and renders the certainty of the latter more undeniable. No species of truth has been subjected to a stricter scrutiny, or tried by ruder opposition, than the evidences of our holy religion. As soon as this heavenly gem was pre-

sented to the world, both Jews and heathens fell upon it with so great violence, that, if it had had the smallest flaw, it must have been shattered into pieces. It has been in the possession of the world for many centuries; and numberless attempts have been successively made to prove that it is a worthless counterfeit; but all these attempts have only contributed to evince with stronger evidence that it is genuine." It is the truth of this latter assertion which our ingenious author undertook calmly to examine, and by solid arguments to illustrate and establish. And what stronger proof could he have afforded of the truth and divinity of Christianity than this, that the more various the lights in which it is viewed, the more narrowly it is inspected, the more violently it is assailed, the more scrutinizingly it is sifted down to the very foundations by subtle and relentless foes, the more firmly is it found planted on a Rock, and the more gloriously does it shine forth in the effulgence of demonstrated heavenly verity?

Still, for the Bible, with its high and exclusive claims of inspiration by God, there is no rest; and for it there can be no rest or peace, till, instrumentally through its influence, sin is banished from the habitations and hearts of men. Accordingly, in our day, besides a mushroom crop of old exploded objections, decked out in harlequin and pantomimic attire for the million, the real or supposed revelations of physical and metaphysical science have, by men of intellect and power, been marshalled in hostile array against the inspired word of God. But already have the antichristian rationalisms and pantheisms of Germany met with merited rebuke and valid confutation, from some of Germany's ablest sons; while the antibiblical misapplications of physical science in France, Great Britain, and America, have been as deservedly rebuked and triumphantly exposed by men of learning and science, who glory in proclaiming their unwavering faith in the oracles of God.

Scientific objections, formerly limited to the learned few, have of late been reduced into simple and compendious forms, adapted to the tastes and capacities of the unlearned many, and hurled promiscuously into the multitudinous streams and streamlets of our popular literature. The results of recondite research, stripped of the cumbrous and prolix processes by which they may have been reached, and which would be unintelligible to the multitude, are thus everywhere propagated, as

if they were so many aphorisms of indisputable authority. Happily, however, men well known to be thoroughly at home in the very highest walks of science, have been prompted to take up the popularized scientific objections of the day against the divine authority of Scripture, and to answer them in forms at once brief and level to the popular understanding. Of this description may be specially noted a small work, of rare excellence and felicitous execution, by the Rev. John H. Pratt, M.A., Archdeacon of Calcutta, entitled, *Scripture and Science not at Variance*. Not being intended to be an original or exhaustive treatise on any one subject, its contents are designedly of a miscellaneous character. It is, in fact, of the nature of a *portable Manual* of popular objections and answers on the subject of Scripture and science, by one of the ablest theologians, as well as one of the profoundest masters of demonstrative science, in the present day.

After all this, it may possibly be asked, What room or occasion is there for a *new* work on "Christian Apologetics," such as that now introduced and recommended to the reader's notice? Much, every way. All the *later* productions above referred to are of a comparatively fragmentary description, being limited to the treatment of some particular department of evidence, or to the answering of some special objections. The *older* standard treatises of a more comprehensive character, while containing materials of imperishable value, do not adequately meet the more prevalent phases of thought in these latter days, or take distinct cognisance of the more peculiar doubts and difficulties which have sprung from recent speculation, criticism, and research. What, therefore, seemed still wanting, was a systematic work for the thoughtful and the studious, embracing, in a compact and connected form, all the leading departments of Christian evidence, and treating them in a style adapted to the exigencies of the present time—a work bearing throughout a specific reference to the distinguishing processes of modern thought, and the distinguishing manifestations of modern unbelief. Such a *desideratum* the posthumous work of Dr. Hetherington on the *Apologetics of the Christian Faith* appears pre-eminently fitted to supply. It is the work of a man whose mind was amply replenished with the past literature of the whole subject of which he treats, and keenly alive to the mental characteristics and religious require-

ments of his own age,—a man, whose mind was capable of seizing at once on the very pith and heart of each principal topic in succession; of brushing aside all crudities, accessories, and irrelevancies with which it may have been overlaid; of exposing the invalidity or hollowness of all merely plausible objections; and of setting the truth itself in a burning focus of purest light.

Even if time and space admitted of it, which they do not, it were altogether foreign to the object of a mere introductory notice, like the present, to attempt anything like a formal estimate or regular critique of the work. Suffice it to say, that it is impossible candidly and carefully to peruse the volume without feeling, at every step, that the reader is under the spell and fascination of a master who, in exercising an imperial sway over the copious materials at his command, displays a thorough comprehension of the lofty task which he has assigned to himself, and no ordinary powers in the tact, skill, and ability with which it is prosecuted to a successful issue. With the tone and spirit which pervade the work throughout, every lover of truth must cordially sympathize. It is the tone and spirit of one who cherishes an intense persuasion of the rectitude and strength, the sacredness and paramount importance, of the cause which he has undertaken to advocate—a cause so holy and divine as to resent, in its defence, the employment of any unhallowed weapons. Accordingly, the Author is open and frank, always rigidly just, often generous and courteous even towards unscrupulous antagonists, without ever incurring the suspicion of yielding to the suggestions or compromises of a spurious liberality. In his maintenance of the validity of the grounds and evidences of Natural Theology, the *à priori* and *à posteriori* arguments for the being and attributes of God, the supreme authority and integrity, the plenary inspiration and infallibility of Scripture as a supernatural revelation from God, he is fearlessly resolute and inflexible, without ever stooping to the hacknied phraseology of acrimonious controversy, or degenerating into the fierce and fiery invectives of a resentful partisanship. With his mode of conducting the more purely argumentative parts of the discussion, there is the strongest reason to be equally well satisfied. It is characterized by calmness and dignity, candour and fairness, acuteness and straightforwardness of aim and purpose. It shirks nothing, it evades no attack, it glosses

over no real difficulty ; and yet, in every instance, the objection or adverse statement, presented in its fullest force, is either effectually parried or triumphantly refuted. From his clearness of intellect and translucency of style, he admirably succeeds, as in his treatment of the *à priori* argument for the being of God, and Hume's argument against miracles, in condensing and presenting in brief, simple, intelligible forms, metaphysical and other discussions, which have often been wrought out in ways at once voluminous, intricate, and obscure. Equally at home in the proper literature of his own subject, and in the wide range of history, philosophy, and literature in general, the author is enabled constantly to relieve the dryness of mere logical discussion with vivid illustrations, which, while they exhilarate with their freshness, and stimulate with their raciness, help powerfully, by their appositiveness, to seal home conviction on the understanding, heart, and conscience of the earnest inquirer.

Altogether, the work may fairly be described as the product of a mind in which the blended faculties of the poet, the logician, the metaphysician, the historian, the theologian, and, above all, the experienced evangelical Christian, co-existed in happiest combination, and in no ordinary degree of development. And when we duly consider the vast extent of the field traversed, the great variety, gravity, and importance of the subjects successively discussed, the rare mental acumen and sound judgment, the solid argument, learned research, and graphic illustration exhibited throughout, we cannot but admit, that in *The Apologetics of the Christian Faith* we have a noble and enduring monument of the varied powers and attainments of the singularly gifted and accomplished Author.

As a posthumous work, it cannot of course be as perfect as if it had been finally revised by the Author himself ; but those who knew him will remember that his acquired mastery in composition was such, that he very seldom had occasion materially to correct his style for the press. Doubtless, had he been spared to edit his own work, many minute touches, in the way of improvements, might have been imparted to it, which could emanate from the mind and pen of the Author alone. Some parts might have been slightly modified, and others either omitted or partially curtailed ; while sundry additions might have been made with specific reference to the more prominent antibiblical assaults of the last half dozen years. But, taking

it all in all, as we find it, it ought to be gratefully hailed as, perhaps, the weightiest contribution to the general cause of Apologetical Christianity which has appeared in our strangely chequered and eventful times. As a whole, it is admirably fitted to meet one of the special wants and necessities of missionaries and others, who are engaged in the arduous vocation of practically recommending the high and transcendent claims of Christianity to the educated natives of a country like India. It is, notably, a volume which, in these days of widespread intellectual enlightenment, might advantageously be kept not merely in the libraries of our colleges and public institutions, but also in the libraries of many of our intelligent working men, and members of our Christian Young Men's Associations, as well as those of our students, whether of theology or the arts, and ministers of the gospel at home and abroad. In it, from its manifold suggestiveness, may be found an armoury of weapons, wherewith to repel the onslaught of old objections, and resist the aggression of new ones—all tending effectually to uphold and confirm “the faith once delivered to the saints,” as Heaven’s most precious legacy to the race of fallen, guilty man.

Respecting the life of the Author, only a few of the leading facts can be stated. He was born on the 4th of June 1803, in the parish of Troqueer, adjoining the town of Dumfries. His early education was obtained at the parish school. In 1822 he was enrolled as a student in the University of Edinburgh, where he distinguished himself in Greek and moral philosophy. As a student, his predilections were decidedly towards the various branches of general literature. In 1829 he published a small volume of considerable poetical promise, under the title of *Dramatic Sketches*; and in 1834, a learned and elaborate work on the *Fulness of Time*,—a work eminently original in its conception and plan, philosophic in its spirit, and masterly in its train of reasoning,—a work, therefore, which, despite certain exuberances of style, is well entitled to a higher place in theological literature than has ever yet been accorded to it. In 1836 he was ordained and settled as minister of the parish of Torphichen, in the presbytery of Linlithgow, where he proved himself to be an eloquent preacher, a diligent and successful pastor. While conscientiously discharging his regular pastoral duties in that secluded rural district, his ever active mind was busily occupied

with a variety of literary labours. There he wrote numerous articles for the *Presbyterian Review*, and the article "Rome" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. There, too, he composed the most popular and widely circulated of his writings, *The Minister's Family*, and his two ecclesiastical works, *The History of the Church of Scotland*, and *The History of the Westminster Assembly*, both characterized by many distinguishing excellences. In 1844 he was removed to the ancient university town of St. Andrews, where he found full scope for his diversified scholarly attainments. There he started, and for four years edited, the *Free Church Magazine*. In recognition of his literary and theological labours, he received from America, first, the honorary degree of LL.D., and next, that of D.D. In 1848 he was translated to Free St. Paul's, Edinburgh; and during his incumbency there, he wrote many able articles for *The North British Review*, and published his interesting and useful *Memoir of Mrs. Coutts*.

By the General Assembly of 1857 he was unanimously appointed to the Chair of Apologetics and Systematic Theology in the Free Church College of Glasgow. On the 6th April 1858 he thus wrote to a friend: "By the kindness and aid of Divine Providence, I have come to the close of my first session's duties as professor here,—weary and exhausted with my work, but not seriously injured. I commenced my course in the beginning of November last, and ended on Friday, 2d April. During that time I have written out carefully not less than *sixty* lectures, as carefully as if they were for the press; and at least *twenty* more in outline, to fill up in an extempore manner. Add to that, incessant study and reading in preparation, prescribing and criticising class exercises, and you will admit that I have had ample employment for winter." The series of lectures, thus prepared, constitute, with scarcely any alterations, the present volume. These intense and incessant labours, however, tended gradually and stealthily to undermine his wiry and naturally vigorous constitution. In 1862 he was seized with a stroke of paralysis, from which he never recovered. After a lingering illness, during which he conspicuously manifested the faith, and patience, and other graces of the Christian character, in May 1865 he gently and sweetly "fell asleep in Jesus." By his own special request, his mortal remains were deposited in the Grange Cemetery, Edinburgh, not far from the resting-

place of Chalmers, Cunningham, Agnew, Speirs, Crawford, Tweedie, Professor Miller, and many other worthies, whom he loved when living, and whose memories he revered when dead. And while, like them, he now "rests from his labours, his works do follow him."

Personally he was endowed with many shining excellences of character. Of his intellectual, literary, and other powers, his own published works furnish the best and most satisfying of all testimonials. Of his many practical virtues, only his most intimate friends could form any adequate estimate. Despite some appearances to the contrary, he was a man of warm affection, keen sensibility, and kindly benevolent disposition. True and faithful he ever was as a friend, wise as a counsellor, and equitable in his judgments of men and measures. Intolerant of error, he could yet pity and compassionate the errorist. Ardent, impulsive, and even impetuous in his temperament, he eagerly threw himself, "soul, body, and spirit," with generous self-denial into any work which he was led to undertake, or into any enterprise in the prosecution of which he was invited to share. Even his failings, as some might reckon them, generally proceeded from the sterling qualities of his nature, sanctified by grace. Imbued, for example, with an innate abhorrence of anything like duplicity or dishonesty, he was apt to express himself with a vehemence of indignation against any palpable wrong, while yet cherishing no resentful feelings towards the wrong-doer. Those, therefore, who knew him best will be the readiest to own, that by his early death his family has lost one of the best of husbands, and one of the kindest of fathers; society, one of the most genial and companionable of its members; the church, of which he was a minister and professor, one of her richest ornaments; and old Scotland, to which he was so fondly attached, one of the ablest and worthiest of her sons.

ALEXANDER DUFF.

THE GRANGE, EDINBURGH,
May 15, 1867.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.



LET us suppose the question to be asked by some earnest and fair inquirer, "What is Natural Theology, and what are its uses?" and let us assume the position that it is our duty to answer that question, so far as that may be in our power. It will at once appear that, in order to obtain something like a clear and intelligible conception to begin with, we must define the compound term Natural Theology. The first half of that term—*Natural*—must mean, what is in accordance with Nature. But this is not enough; for it may still be asked, What is Nature? A great deal depends upon forming a right idea of the true meaning of the word; for it has been much misunderstood and misused. The proper etymology of the word suggests its true meaning. The nature (*natura*) of anything is its being *about-to-be*, its being *about-to-become*, its *futurition of existence*, as by a fixed law of *coming-to-pass*, or *being produced*; so that, if that out of which it is produced be assumed, it will certainly be produced. The meaning will be exactly the same if we take the Greek word φύσις, what is produced, born, becomes—the *physical* or *natural*, to resume the more common word. Even this will show that nature is the region of cause and effect; and from this will follow the notion of the steady uniformity of its operations,—a cause always producing a corresponding effect,—that effect becoming in turn a cause, and producing another corresponding effect; and so on in continual progression, suggesting, it may be, to some minds the idea that nature is an endless chain, or a linked circle of cause and effect. Could this be conceived of as existing eternally, without beginning or end, it would be absolute mindless Fatalism—blind Necessity—utter, heartless, and hopeless Atheism.

But this conclusion is impossible and irrational: 1st, because the notion of an endless succession of links depending on each other, and all upon nothing, is a sheer absurdity, an impossible thought; 2d, because each man knows that he is himself a cause—that there is in him something which he calls *Mind*, by which he is enabled to think thoughts, to *will* them into actions, and to employ his own bodily powers and energies in producing what he has thus thought, willed, devised, and effected, and that therefore there is causation, and must be a cause. Now, as man is a composite being, combining a *body* that can *act* with a *mind* that can *think*; and as man's thought is not in the region of cause and effect alone, though his body is, but in the region of mind above and outside of mere nature, working there spontaneously, and originating causation according to its own power, and producing effects in nature different from its ordinary effects, apart from his interposition,—and yet all the while he exists in his composite being as an effect,—man himself must be accounted for as having been produced by some anterior and higher Cause. Further, there must be in the cause, at least all that is in the effect: there may be indefinitely more, but there cannot possibly be less; there must be *mind* in the cause that produced *man*. But mind, even human mind—man—is above mere physical being, nature, and can employ it also freely according to his own will, using nature or abusing it as he may please. And since he can both think and act, producing his action by means of his will, he must be, and is, a free agent. There is mind, then; and that mind is above nature, and is free, and is a cause. Yet thought and fact alike repudiate the notion that mere man is, or can be, the First Cause. There must, however, be a First Cause, and that First Cause must be a *Mind*, and above *Nature*,—must be free, absolute, unlimited, unconditioned, not bounded by space or time, infinite, eternal; and the First Cause thus conceived must be what we indicate by the great name GOD. Thus we enter into the theological part of the compound term, the idea of the divine. The attempt to form some conception of this Eternal First Cause, GOD, and of our relation to Him, is the object of *Natural Theology*.

But Natural Theology may spring, if not from a more direct and apparently simpler source, yet at least without having attempted to travel through any such analytical investigation.

Universal man, or all mankind, have always and everywhere believed in the existence of a God or gods,—that is, in the existence of some Divine, Supernatural Being, on whom all nature depends. In other words, there is in man an intuitive and irresistible conviction that there exists a Supreme Being—GOD—and that He Himself stands in a relation of *dependence*, *probably of duty*, to that Supreme Being. This appears to be an inevitable and irresistible conviction; and its *reality* may be established by means of an induction as universal and constant as could be desired, almost as much so as could be imagined, considering the diversities of circumstance and condition in which the human race is found to exist. I have said its *reality*, but I have not as yet said its *truth*; for the question, how to account for that conviction, whether it have any true foundation to rest upon, is the very question which Natural Theology has to endeavour to answer.

That there is a necessity for the answer, is evident from the fact that there is a necessity in the thought, so that no thinking mind can avoid the thought and conviction that there is a God. This is proved by the entire history of all past ages, and all nations, so far as history can reach; and it is of importance to notice, that the more ancient any history is, the more strong and impressive is its record of belief in the existence of a Divine Being. It has been asserted, indeed, that tribes of savages have been found, among whom there are no traces of any such belief; but this assertion has not been proved. The most savage, barbarous, and ignorant tribes, are those who are found in lonely islands, or the remotest corners of great continents,—those evidently who have been driven or have wandered farthest from the primary abodes of man, the central seats of life and civilisation; in the deserts of Central Africa, or at the stormy Cape; in Patagonia, or the Oceanic Islands, or Australia. Besides, minute research has found, that even among these savage tribes there still exist obscure traditions, intimating that their fathers had some knowledge of and intercourse with supernatural beings and powers; which knowledge has been forgotten and lost, and in dim commemoration of which, certain superstitious rites are still observed. This statement could be amply confirmed were it thought necessary. That such savage tribes have no religion is admitted, and also that they have no natural theology; for their condition shows that they have sunk

beneath the consciousness of the necessity of any such elevating thought and inquiry. But the very fact that these savage races are everywhere perishing in the presence of civilised man, is a proof that they are degraded beneath the ability either to rescue themselves, or to be rescued by mere human help. They need supernatural aid, for nature in their barbarized condition is progressive destruction. They have no God, and are without hope in the world; no gospel, and without it they cannot be saved.

But leaving the vain and fallacious dream of would-be philosophical historians, we resume consideration of the question before us, relative to Natural Theology. It has been already asserted, that no thinking mind can avoid the thought and conviction that there is a God,—whether that great thought have sprung up inevitably in the mind in the mere exercise of conscious thinking, in accordance with self-consciousness, and what are called the *laws of thought*; or by the force of intuitive and irresistible conviction, without any process of reasoning. That the greater part of mankind entertain a belief in the existence of God, in consequence of intuitive and irresistible conviction, without much or any process of reasoning, is certain; and this generally suffices as a ground on which to rest all hortatory appeals to conscience in public addresses and instructions. But in an age like the present, which is so proud of, and confident in, its intellectual attainments and power of reasoning, it is necessary to meet and refute, on their own chosen ground, the objections raised by intellectual and rationalistic thinkers.

The topic immediately before us, then, is this, To inquire briefly by what kind of argument or process of reasoning it is, that men may attain an intelligent conviction of the being of God, and show that such a conviction and belief is reasonable. This great conviction may arise in the following manner: When the mind of a child is beginning to acquire consciousness, it is at the same moment beginning to acquire some perception of *self*, and of something which is *not self*. All the senses seem to reside in *self*, and to teach *self-consciousness*; but at the same time they seem inevitably to teach, or at least to suggest, that there is an existence external to self, by which these sensations are caused. Every step in the progress of consciousness continues to repeat the same lesson, and to apply it to an innumerable number of new and various sensations; until the child comes to consider itself as surrounded by an

external world, fitted to call forth, and always calling forth, those innumerable sensations of which it is conscious. Then follows experience, with all that it can teach respecting the uniformity of these sensations in uniform or corresponding circumstances, suggesting to the now awakened and conscious mind the uniform adaptation of *self* and the *external world* to each other. This is generally sufficient for the ordinary business of life, and satisfactory to the common sense of the common mind. To this is very easily added, by a very slight reflection, the notion of *causation*. No man can rationally think that he himself began to exist without any cause, or that any event takes place without any cause. Further, he perceives that he himself is a cause, that his mind possesses the power of *willing*, and his body the power or capacity of obeying that *will* in such a manner as to effect changes and produce results that have their origin in him. This is a step not only very easily taken, but unavoidably taken; yet it is a mighty step in advance, so far as his own progress in thinking is concerned.

Let it be observed to what this step inevitably tends. Events, he perceives, are for ever arising in the external world. All these events had causes. The external world is therefore a perpetual chain of causes and effects. Yet, as not one of them took place uncaused, they must have had their origin in some great cause, which may be called the *First Cause*; and this First Cause, considering how inconceivably vast are the effects produced by it, must be inconceivably mighty—may be justly called Omnipotent. This First Cause must also be above nature, for it must have caused, as it still causes, nature. It is therefore supernatural. But it may perhaps be only a supernatural necessity, a blind yet almighty fate. “This cannot be all,” suggests the mind of the self-conscious thinker; “for I also am a *cause*, and yet not a *necessity*, since I can and do determine my own causations. I have a body and an arm, and with these I can operate on the chain of causes in the external world, producing new combinations and important changes, as if from without that chain. And although my body and arm are material, and belong to the material world, yet it is the energizing impulse of my mind that moves my arm, and thus originates the change, and is the cause.” “By analogy, then,” he argues, “I may, or rather must, infer that mind is cause, and therefore that the First Cause is an Omnipotent Mind.”

Thus far might human thought and consciousness (for thought is not otherwise an existence than as it is the essential attribute of a conscious thinking being) legitimately advance, even although unaided, if also unobstructed; but at this very point it encounters the opposition of a peculiarly subtle and dangerous antagonist, if indeed that antagonist did not oppose its progress at an earlier stage. The antagonist to which I allude springs from an element early introduced into the philosophy of mind, tending almost inevitably to scepticism, for a special reason seldom contemplated by philosophers.

The Philosophy of Mind may be contemplated in three aspects: those of *Knowing*, of *Feeling*, and of *Desire* and *Will*—the *Conative*. The region of *Knowing* is the first of these; and the first question which is suggested in that first region is, “How does man know?” immediately followed by, “Is there certainty in man’s knowledge?” The department which has to deal with this inquiry is that which is termed *Perception*. We are conscious of certain sensations awakened in us by means of what appears to be the contact of our senses with something external. What is it which we thus perceive, and by perceiving begin to know? The answer of consciousness appears to be, that we are in immediate contact with external objects. At first we are satisfied with that answer. But an inquiry is raised by a speculative thinker, What it is that our consciousness really means. It seems to affirm that we are in immediate contact with external objects, and have thereby an immediate knowledge of them. But is this really the case? A man’s hand is in contact with fire, and he is conscious of pain; or with water, and he is conscious of refreshing coolness; or with stone, or metal, or wood, and he is conscious of roughness, hardness, or smoothness; but is the pain in the fire, or in the hand of the sentient and conscious man? A man sees a house or a tree; does his eye touch the tree? or is it in his eye? Has he really been so in contact with these objects, as that he has an immediate knowledge of them—of their real substance or nature? Or has he not rather obtained only a *mediate* knowledge of them, that is, a knowledge of them only through the medium of his own sensations; and that therefore he knows *immediately* only himself and his own sensations? Consciousness declares that we have an immediate knowledge of our own being, of *self*, and of external existence, of the *not-self*. And this is the com-

mon belief, the basis of all our common knowledge, and of all our practical conduct.

But the inquiry has been raised, and must be investigated, that we may ascertain whether Perception can give us any certain basis for our knowledge. What, then, *is* Perception, and what does it give us? Perception is the consciousness of self-existence, and of something which is not simple consciousness, but which always excites or accompanies consciousness. Sensations always excite the idea of a conscious being which feels them, and which we term *Self*, or the *Ego*; but they also suggest the notion or concept of cause,—of something which caused them,—which is *not-self*. When we think somewhat deeply, we refer the sensations directly to the sentient body which feels them, the consciousness to the thinking mind, and the cause of them to external objects. In this view (which I cannot but regard as the true view), consciousness is simply contemplative, being nothing beyond the mere consciousness, by that which knows, of that which is known. This is Sensation proper, conjoined immediately with Perception proper, forming the primary cognition of *self* and *not-self*. Mankind generally admit this as the first step of knowledge, and as furnishing a sufficiently certain foundation for all other knowledge. The inquisitive philosopher attempts to disturb or entirely subvert this certitude; and in this manner: “You say that consciousness assures you of the immediate reality of your perceptions; but may not this be quite a mistake? Suppose, for instance, that your perception relates to some object of great magnitude, or at a great distance, with which you are obviously not in immediate contact; what then? It cannot be the object itself that you perceive, but some image or representation of it. You do not see the sun, but only an image of it, represented on the retina of your eye. The tree which you perceive at some distance is not touching your eye; but you see the image of it on the retina. That image is present to your mind immediately; but it is the medium by means of which the external object is presented to your consciousness. Thus, in the act of consciousness, there is an immediate knowledge of self, and a mediate image representative of an external object—a *not-self*.” This is the essence of what is called the Representative Theory of Perception. It is the basis of the whole idealism of Berkeley; and by means of one additional step of peculiar subtlety, of the whole scepticism of Hume.

A different set of thinkers of the Representative class originally proceed still further, and deny to the mind not only any consciousness of an external not-self, or non-Ego, or external object represented by an image, but of a non-Ego at all; and hold that what the mind immediately perceives, and mistakes for an external object, is only the *Ego itself peculiarly modified*. When you held your hand moderately near the fire, say they, you *felt*, or *perceived*, the sensation of heat, and it was pleasurable: when you moved it nearer, or into the fire, you perceived pain, and it was unpleasant; yet the *pain* was not in the fire any more than the pleasurable sensation was—they were only modifications of your own sentient self. Some add to this what they probably intend for an orthodox explanation, suited to religious thinking. God, they say, may have so constituted the human being—a being of a composite nature, *soul* and *body*—that man instinctively refers all the sensations of which he is conscious, to the agency of external objects upon him through the medium of his sentient body, while they are only the agency of God Himself, on or in his mind, causing those modifications of the Ego which he perceives and refers to external objects. This theory is essentially identical with that which is held by the higher Hindoo philosophy, when it resolves all things into Maya, or Illusion, as they term it, caused by the action of the primary unconscious, impersonal, Divine Monad, Brâhm.

This theory, it will easily be seen, is utterly inconsistent with everything like true personal religion. It assumes, indeed, a spiritualistic aspect, as if it were rendering a kind of honour to God, in reducing all our knowledge into the direct though unperceived agency of God upon the soul. But it represents that agency as ideal, reducing all our knowledge into such a kind of idealism as resolves itself into an Idealistic Pantheism. This was not the theory of Dr. Reid; although Dr. Brown seems to have held it, so far as can be gathered from his rather vague disquisitions,—vague often by their very copiousness of illustration, and flowing eloquence of style. It is not the Idealism of Berkeley, though closely allied to it, and held by several of his followers, who will tell you, that in Perception man is conscious of himself and of God's ideas, which are all realities to man, though not inherent in what we call external nature, but in the Divine Nature, therefore divinely real; so that it is a great thing for man to be conscious of himself and

of divine realities, misconceived though they are, and regarded erroneously as external objects of perception.

German philosophy takes a different course. Assuming that the natural and the supernatural mutually exclude each other,—that matter and mind are so entirely different from each other as to be unable to enter into any intelligible relation with each other; it draws the conclusion, that the human mind cannot have any consciousness or immediate knowledge of anything but its own modes of existence,—that what the mind perceives and mistakes for an external object, is only the Ego itself peculiarly modified. This is the basis of Fichte's Anthropological Idealism. According to this theory, there is no reality cognisable by man in the universe but himself and his modes of consciousness. This is not Pantheism, not properly Scepticism, but Humanism exclusive of any Deity, therefore Atheism. With this theory there cannot, of course, be any such thing as Natural Theology.

But neither can there be any Natural Theology in connection with any theory of Perception which leads to Pantheistic Idealism; for such a theory abolishes all Personalities, human and divine,—abolishes, consequently, all conception of Responsibility, and leaves only an Illusion, or a Fatalism. It is not strange that many, feeling themselves unable to escape from such theories, should sink into scepticism, and believe nothing, since, as it seems, they cannot trust their own senses and their consciousness. Yet such is the power of practical life, and the force of natural necessities, that men cannot rest satisfied with a mere empty contemplative scepticism. The necessity of providing for their own physical wants is felt too urgently and imperatively,—a *stern reality* for them. They must be up and doing, as human nature appears to command, in this working world, be it representative or not. This active work of theirs they call Secularism; and while it is practical enough and real enough in the toils which it undertakes, it is, at the same time, practical Scepticism in all religious matters,—nay, practical Infidelity and practical Atheism. It is not strange that Secularists set aside the idea of any possible natural theology.

All these fatal theories spring necessarily from the assumed difficulty of finding any indisputably sound basis of human knowledge. It is true that the mass of mankind never dispute the dictates of their own consciousness,—the evidence of their

own common sense,—and therefore never feel the difficulty. But all men who happen to have both leisure for meditative thought, and inclination to pursue it, are constrained to meet the difficulty of ascertaining what certainty there is in human knowledge; and the opinions which such men ultimately entertain descend gradually to lower and still lower levels, till they ultimately pervade the minds of the community. The speculative thinking of one age will generally be found to determine the practical character and action of the next, either for good or evil, especially for evil. So apparently slight a matter as an erroneous theory of Perception unsettled men's confidence in the grounds of all knowledge, and led to their ready reception of one kind of scepticism after another, manifesting itself first in the Philosophical Deism of England; which was followed by the Idealism of Berkeley and his followers,—then by the subtle and cold scepticism of Hume and his followers,—then by the Rationalism of Germany,—and finally by the haughty Humanism of Fichte and Hegel,—the Pantheism, idealistic or materialistic, of others,—and the remorseless Positivism of Comte, with its mean companions, Phrenology and the Development Theory.

But the natural convictions of mankind, or the voice of our common consciousness, known as *common sense*, has always held, that what we immediately perceive is what really exists,—that we perceive without the intervention of any medium, and that we are therefore “immediately conscious in perception of an *Ego* and a *non-Ego*, known together, and known in contrast with each other. This is termed philosophically the Duality of Consciousness. It gives me the irresistible conviction of two facts, or rather two aspects of the same fact,—the necessary complements of each other,—that I am, and that something different from me exists. In this act of perception I am conscious of *myself* as the *perceiving subject*, and of an *external reality* as the *object perceived*; and I am conscious of both existences in the same indivisible moment of intuition. The knowledge of the subject does not precede nor follow the knowledge of the object,—neither determines, neither is determined by the other.” This gives a sound, firm, immutable basis for human knowledge and belief, equally in each of its two grand divisions, the mental and the physical,—the knowledge of mind and matter, realized in man himself as the known synthesis of mind and matter,

conscious of himself, and thence equally conscious of both, and therefore equally capable of constructing a true scientific mental philosophy, and a true scientific physical philosophy, each regulated by its own proper laws, yet relatively interdependent and strong in their counterbalanced equilibrium.

This primary or fundamental position being thus securely established, we can now proceed to construct a true natural theology, and to mark its value, as enabling us to meet and refute all Scepticism—all Pantheism, idealistic or materialistic—and all Humanism, whether that of Fichte and Hegel,—of Positive Philosophy, of Socialism, or of mere physical development in man and nature.

Commencing with the primary element of knowledge, *perception*, we have an immediate consciousness of the two co-essential and necessary constituents of that primary element, the certainty of the existence of *self*, or the *Ego*, and of its co-efficient, the *not-self*, or *non-Ego*. From this we proceed to learn in our own conscious agency the principle of *cause and effect*, and become aware of the great truth that proper causation resides in mind, and that its consequences, operations, effects, are manifested in the changes of material existence throughout all nature. But as we cannot regard ourselves as first cause, and yet have learned to know that causation resides in mind, we are constrained to conclude, and we legitimately conclude, that there is some inconceivably powerful Mind, and that in that Mind resides all essential causation, not only as First Cause, but as still comprehending, pervading, ruling the universe.

The profound conviction and belief in the truth of this great thought is the legitimately fair and irresistibly true deduction from the primary position given to man in the dualism, or natural-realism, of the *self* and *not-self* in consciousness, and is the basis of a true natural theology; and this, again, as we shall find, cannot be satisfied with the results at which it arrives, with any conception of the Omnipotent First Cause which it can form; but longs for, and longing, strives for, some higher revelation of God by Himself—some revealed theology, which shall meet the soul's deep longings, and elevate man into a closer relationship with God.

CHAPTER II.

STATEMENT OF THE NATURE AND METHOD OF ARGUMENT RELATIVE TO NATURAL THEOLOGY.

SEC. I. PRIMARY BELIEF IN A SUPREME BEING INVARIABLE AND UNIVERSAL.



HERE is in man an intuitive and irresistible conviction that there exists a *Supreme Being*—GOD; and that he himself stands in a relation of *dependence, probably of duty*, to that Supreme Being. This appears to be an inevitable and irresistible conviction; and its *reality* may be established by means of an induction as universal and constant as could be desired, and almost as much so as could be imagined, considering the diversities of circumstance in which the human race is found to exist. I have said its *reality*, but I have not said its *truth*; for the question whether that conviction has any *true foundation* to rest upon, is the very question with which we shall have to deal. That this conviction *really exists*, can be proved by an almost universal and invariable induction. The whole history of the human race may be said to furnish an unbroken testimony to the *reality* or their belief in God, or in gods. Whether in one Only God, or in a plurality of gods, does not affect the result; for in each case the *reality* of the human conviction that there is a divine nature appears. It has indeed been said, that there are some wild and barbarous tribes, or stray specimens of mankind in the savage state, who manifest no notion of a God, and have no kind of religious belief. But this vague assertion has never been proved, and may be said to be incapable of proof, since the very barbarism and ignorance of such wild tribes or individuals renders it almost impossible to hold any communication with them, and altogether impossible to detect and understand the vanishing forms of their deepest and most secret shadowy

thoughts, or hopes, or fears. Let it be remembered, also, that barbarian or half-awakened man has always been disposed to conceal his deepest thoughts of a religious nature, and to regard them as the more sacred, the more mysterious and dark they could be kept.

Holding, then, that this conviction is *real*, the question inevitably arises, How can this universal belief in the existence of some being or beings of a divine nature be explained or accounted for? This at once suggests the inquiry which forms the basis of all Natural Theology, viz., Can human reason, without any higher aid, by means of its own resources and discoveries alone, account for this conviction, and answer the great question thereby raised, and so supersede the necessity of any supernatural revelation? Or does the highest achievement of reason accomplish no more than the supplying of a basis for such a revelation, rendering it intelligibly desirable that there should be, and probable that there has been, and still exists, a supernatural revelation? ▷

It is of the utmost importance that we should endeavour to obtain, at the very outset, a clear conception of the inquiry in which we are about to engage—the task we have undertaken to perform. Let it then be clearly understood, that we have not to *demonstrate* that there is a God, and to make that certain to human reason, according to the logical forms of human thought, and in definite human language. It is perfectly possible to *believe* what it may be perfectly impossible to *demonstrate*. It is not, for example, possible to *demonstrate* in logical form the fact of our own existence, or of the existence of other men, as every one knows who is at all conversant with what are termed philosophical or rather metaphysical inquiries; and yet it is impossible for any man really to doubt these facts. Every man believes them intuitively, and by the irresistible evidence of his own consciousness. Our inquiry does not, then, assume the form of a *demonstration*, and ought not to assume that form. But it assumes the form of a *problem* to be *solved*, if possible. By a *problem* we understand that there is some truth which we already believe, but cannot as yet trace the processes of thought which entitle us rationally to frame and hold that belief. In solving a problem, we endeavour to trace in our own minds all the various steps of thought by which we are supposed to know, and actually do believe, the truth contained in the enunciation of the problem.

This language may perhaps appear too like the language of mathematical science. But all sound and clear thinking can be expressed in accordance with those primary laws of thought which form the necessary elements of all true science. And Natural Theology, as we hold, can be shown to be as true a science, within its own province, as any with which the human mind is conversant. Let it be remembered, also, that the essence of our inquiry is, How can the universal belief that there is a Supreme Being be accounted for? That is, there exists already a belief, a problem already held in its axiomatic form by the mind. Let that problem be solved, if possible, by tracing all the various thoughts or processes of thinking by which we are supposed to know, and do actually believe, that problem. Many a young mathematician may remember that, in some instances, the very enunciation of a problem enabled him at once to apprehend its truth; and yet perhaps he did not find it quite so easy to trace all the steps of thought by which the solution was made out. Nay, even if he failed to make out the solution, he was still able to believe the problem—to hold that it enunciated a truth. This remark may serve to show that there is a great advantage secured in regarding the great inquiry of Natural Theology—the being of God—as a *problem to be solved*; both because, if we should fail in the solution, we might still continue to hold the belief of its truth; and because it might be found that, in our attempts at a solution, we had arrived at the very position in which we should be most ready to receive a supernatural revelation, and perhaps to find that such a revelation was the only absolutely full and perfect solution of which it was capable. The problem, then, is this: *That there is a God, we and all rational men believe; but by what arguments or processes of reasoning can we prove or trace the reasonableness of that belief?*

SEC. II. THE THREE DIVISIONS OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE
AVAILABLE TO PROVE THE REASONABLENESS OF THIS
BELIEF.

It will be obvious that every legitimate element of human thought and knowledge may be employed in the solution of this great problem; but also that, though all may be made available, they are not all of equal value. They may be all

included in *three* divisions—the *knowledge of nature*, the *intuitions of reason*, and the *dictates of the moral consciousness*. Each of these has a department of its own, and may from that department furnish what it can towards the solution. But we are not bound to restrict our inquiries within the limits of any one department, and to leave off our attempted solution when that department fails us. We feel ourselves at liberty also to give to any one department the precedency in our inquiry, if that shall seem to be the most scientific method; and when it shall have yielded what it fairly can, or what we can fairly deduce from it, we shall regard it as perfectly legitimate to carry forward with us all the amount of solution we may have obtained,—employ it in the process of opening up the next department, perhaps shedding on it some light which it could not itself have yielded,—and thus advance with our solution in a constantly accumulating process of proof and illustration.

The elements of our solution will thus be manifold, but not therefore confused or mutually contradictory. *Material substance*, *efficient cause*, and *mental power*, will all be employed in the solution of this problem,—that is, arguments and illustrations drawn from these sources; but not more so than they are in all knowledge and science whatsoever. When we direct attention chiefly to the *intuitions of reason* and the *laws of thought*, we are engaged in tracing what is termed the *à priori* argument; when our views are bent mainly on the topics contained in the *knowledge of nature*, we pursue the *à posteriori* argument; and when we enter into the high region of the *moral consciousness*, we shall find that we are inevitably not only combining both the other two, but also raising them both to a dignity and power not otherwise their own, and thus developing and completing our cumulative and combined argument.

It is a known, an indisputable reality, that man has a deep and ineradicable belief in the existence of a God. That is a *mental fact*. Can any account of this *mental fact* be given by the philosophy of thought? This surely is a natural and relevant question. Nay, it seems to have an inherent right to be regarded as the *first* form in which the question ought to be put; and the answer which it may give seems to have the same right to form the first step in the solution. If it be found that in the laws of thought, as the philosophy of thought can discover and state them, there is an intuitive

necessity of thinking the thought of God ; if every profound analysis of thought be found always to bring us into contact with *that* deepest and most permanently indestructible and necessary thought,—then it will appear certain that we ought to begin our attempted solution by an investigation of the *à priori* argument. It may also be argued, that we cannot safely refuse to follow this course, for another reason. The philosophy of thought is necessarily the *prima philosophia*, so far as mere reason is concerned. It may not be able to establish any absolute and necessary truth ; but it is able to dissolve almost every error. Even Greek philosophy, while it could not establish a true religion, proved perfectly competent to the task of destroying the false religions which had previously prevailed in Greece. May it not also be found competent to prepare in some degree the human mind for the reception of true religion, though it cannot produce it ? It did not enable Socrates to know that there would be a supernatural revelation ; but it led him to utter an expression of earnest longing for, if not hope of, such an event.

A remark or two may be made here on a point of the utmost importance, to which some may not have devoted much thought. What are the primary elements of belief, or the primary principle of belief ? There are but two such absolutely primary elements—*sensation* and *consciousness* ; or the evidence of the *bodily senses*, and the evidence of *Consciousness*. From sensation, or by the evidence of the senses, we become acquainted with *external nature*,—with the universe around us, so far as our senses enable us to explore it,—with all that is *not-self*. From consciousness, or by the evidence of consciousness, we become acquainted with *self*,—with *mind*, and all its faculties,—with *thought*, and all its laws. But as man is himself constituted so as to have both mind and body,—so as to be a synthesis of both *mind* and *matter*,—he may be conceived of as having equal access to both of these sources of knowledge, and to combine the elements of both in every single act or fact of knowledge. As thus combined, he gives to this primary principle of knowledge the compendious designation of *Perception*. Thus designated, Perception implies the combined sensation by which the consciousness was elicited till it took cognizance of it, conceived it in thought, and made it a point of *knowledge* and *belief*. When we use the terms *knowledge* and *belief*, we

necessarily imply that knowledge precedes belief, since we cannot be said to believe what we do not know. We may believe many a thing that we do not fully know; but, after all, we believe it only so far as we know it: all beyond is merely hypothetical. It will at once be evident that the certitude of our knowledge will depend upon the veracity of these two sources of knowledge, Sensation and Consciousness, and the confidence we place in their veracity. And as Sensation generally arouses Consciousness, the first inquiry will most probably be into the amount or degree of confidence which may be placed in the evidence of our senses. Then begins the inquiry whether we know external nature *mediately* or *immediately*, — whether through the media of *ideas*, or directly and in itself. This whole realm of inquiry belongs to the Philosophy of Perception.

The first inquiry of philosophic thought, then, must be, *to know existence*. This, of course, suggests another inquiry—*what it is to know at all*. Here scepticism may begin, and deny the very possibility of knowing. This, in truth, is where the deepest scepticism does and must begin. But here also it ought to stop. For if the sceptic be really of a philosophic mind, he must be aware that his first position puts him out of the region of reasoning. He denies the possibility of knowing: he denies, therefore, equally the possibility of *knowing that he does not know*. He has destroyed alike the possibility of either affirming or denying; and if he cannot himself get beyond that position, he can have no right to attempt to obstruct those who are willing to advance.


This advance is made by the mind's admission of *its own existence*—by *consciousness of self*. It will be found that this *consciousness of self-existence* is either expressed or assumed in all knowledge; and that no one, not even the avowed sceptic, can really and seriously dispute this position. If a sceptic were to say, "Come now, sweep away all prejudices out of your mind, and I shall prove to you that you cannot know your own existence, far less prove it; and that I neither know my own existence, nor can prove it,"—the ready and sufficient answer would be, "You have already admitted both points: for you have assumed so much as to my actual existence, as that I can hear and apprehend an argument; and of your own, as that you can think and speak:" that is, our sceptic has admitted or assumed both mind and body, the faculties of thought and sen-

sation, in both himself and me ; otherwise neither of us could think and argue, and neither could he speak, nor I hear. No sceptic, then, can properly argue ; because scepticism amounts to a denial or doubt of both his own existence and that of other men, and yet to argue would be to admit both. Such is its sophistical and suicidal position.

Whenever philosophic thought, or *mind intelligently conscious of its own existence*, has reached this position, and realized it, there cannot but arise another cognate yet counterpart perception. Whenever it knows *its own existence*, however dimly and ill-defined at first, it must perceive also the existence of something *not itself*—something which meets it, stands opposed to it in every possible direction, and resists it, always and everywhere, yet offers such a strangely and wonderfully adjusted resistance, as serves to draw forth and cultivate its own latent and hitherto unsuspected energies.

In this is to be found the originating point of all metaphysical thought, of all mental philosophy, of all psychical or psychological speculation ; and from this point the lines of thought have diverged in countless directions. Yet mark well the point, and its true nature, that you may see whether these divergencies were inevitable, or arose from a perverse ingenuity which needed to be accounted for,—not as ignorance involuntarily erring, but as wilful perversity. The *point and moment* is *consciousness of self-existence*, and in that point and moment, perception of something *not self*, but opposing, resisting, and yet eliciting the energies of *self* by its friendly and well-adjusted opposition. At this point the question may arise, Is this something *external to me* ? Or is it some peculiarity of *self*, some *law* or *mode of my own thought* ? Is what I had begun to term *self* only a *mode of thought* ? Here begin all the vague inquiries of *Idealism*, and all the forms of what is called *Subjective Philosophy*. But we may fairly ask, Had the first thought been rightly investigated ? Had the earliest question obtained an adequate answer ? That earliest question it is of essential importance to have answered first : Is this something *external to me* ? Let it be observed that the inquiry is forced upon the newly awakened consciousness of self-existence by the sensation and perception of *resistance to that self*. But how could any such sensation or perception come from *self* ? This is impossible ; for if we were to suppose this, we must suppose

a divided *self*, one half of which resists the other, leaving it impossible to determine which of these is self,—that is, destroying the idea of self by making it *self-contradictory*. The conclusion, then, must be, that as certainly as we can be *conscious of self-existence*, so certainly can we perceive that there is a resisting something which is *not self*. It follows, or certainly ought to follow, that as the laws of the conscious self-existence must be sought in *that self*, so the laws of the resisting something must be sought *in itself*; and that we shall inevitably err if we seek the laws of *either in the other*, or imagine that either of them can be but a modified existence of the other.

Those who are conversant with such studies will readily perceive that we are already so far engaged with the vexed question relative to *mind* and *matter*, or the *subjective* and the *objective*, to use the terms of modern philosophy. They will also perceive both at how very early a stage of philosophical thinking such inquiries must arise, and also how much they necessarily influence the whole of our thought in every department of mental investigation. There cannot be a natural theology at all, without some adequate knowledge of these inquiries; for without that, we could not bring arguments and proofs either from the region of *mind* or from that of *matter*: we could not even avail ourselves of those magnificent appeals to external nature with which the Bible abounds, if we were not able to hold that they relate to what is essentially external to man. But if it be true that the irresistible intuition of *conscious self-existence* contains necessarily, and gives the equally irresistible perception and conviction of, an *external, resisting something* which is *not self*, and that any other notion is self-contradictory, absurd, and impossible,—then we will begin our investigations from a secure position, which scepticism cannot assail, and from which we may advance with firm and fearless tread. 

There is yet one somewhat abstruse course of thought, to which I am desirous of directing attention. I have merely adverted to the position of scepticism; but it is not my design to enter into any discussion with the sceptic at this early stage. We shall first attempt to ascertain what positive conclusions we can legitimately reach, and then meet the various objections brought forward by all kinds and classes of antagonists, without any dread of the result. I have also employed already some of the phraseology of modern philosophy, and at least suggested

its relation to the more ancient philosophical terms. The truth is, that modern philosophy is much more a *new terminology* than it is a *new philosophy*. When, for example, the modern philosophy uses such terms as the *Me* and the *not-Me*, the *Ego* and the *non-Ego*, the *subjective* and the *objective*, it may be fairly challenged to show in what these terms differ from the formerly current language, *mind* and *matter*, and what new ideas they convey, or are intended to convey. I am not about to condemn the new terminology; neither shall I abstain from using it, as perhaps it has become so familiar, and is supposed to be more definite than the language formerly employed. Let me show how this may be done in the case of the somewhat abstruse course of thought to which I wish yet briefly to direct attention.


There is an interesting and close analogy between the modes by which we obtain knowledge of the external and of the internal. In obtaining knowledge of the external—the *not-Me*—resistance gives rise to sensation. Sensation is therefore chronologically antecedent to perception, and both of these are antecedent to reflection and consciousness of reflection; but reflection is the action of the internal, and consciousness of reflection is the self-assertion of the *Ego*, or self-conscious inmost being. Yet the *Ego*, or *self-conscious* internal being, or spiritual essence, was necessarily and logically antecedent to the *consciousness*, the *reflection*, the *perception*, and the *sensation*. Thus, by analogy, although the *à posteriori* form of argument may be regarded as chronologically antecedent to the *à priori*, although men may commonly begin to reason from nature and its manifestations, yet the *à priori* is necessarily and logically antecedent to the *à posteriori*. The perceptive nature of man, and its action, may be conditionally and chronologically necessary to call forth the conscious and spiritual in man; but it could not have done so, had there not been antecedently in essence the spiritual and possibly conscious. The feeling of resistance to something external, and of volition entertained and power exerted in overcoming or employing that external something, must ever be present to the consciousness of the *Ego*, in all its main conditions—sensational, intellectual, and moral. This will necessarily suggest *relation*, and even *relation in kind*, yet opposite and transcendent. The limited will suggest the unlimited, the false will suggest the true, the wrong will suggest the right, the conditioned will suggest the unconditioned, the

finite will suggest the infinite ; that which *begins to be* will suggest that which *does not begin to be*, the *caused* will suggest the *uncaused*, the finite moral and personal will suggest the infinite moral and personal, the temporal will suggest the eternal. Such are the grand topics which may be suggested to the *Ego*—the *Me*—the rational and conscious human mind, when it assumes the right position, and reasons truly from a true and rational analogy. But it must ever remember that it does not know, and cannot know, *its own beginning to be*, nor the *beginning to be* of the *resisting something*. It cannot know *absolute beginning* in any thing or being. The *absolute à priori* is absolutely impossible for man. It is the region of divine thought and being, yet can be given to man, but only *by revelation*. It is, however, that to which the mind will ever aspire, and without which it can never be fully satisfied.

For these and similar reasons, we adopt the course of commencing with the *à priori* argument, as necessarily the first stage of thought.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARGUMENT A PRIORI.

T has been already stated that our method is, not to frame a demonstration, but to solve a problem; that in the solution we may trace either the *à priori* or the *à posteriori* course of thought, or may combine the two into one great composite argument; and that, for reasons which appear valid, we shall commence with the *à priori* argument. The problem to be solved is this: *That there is a God, as we and all rational men believe; to show, then, by what arguments or processes of thought and reasoning we can prove or trace the reasonableness of this belief.*

SEC. I. OBJECTIONS.

There have been, and still are, many objections made against *à priori* thinking and reasoning, founded generally, we believe, on misconceptions of what the term really means. These misconceptions have been caused not unfrequently by the extravagant pretensions of those who advocate that course of thought; and those pretensions have been often made by persons who, while imagining that they were *à priori* thinkers, were nevertheless manifestly unacquainted with the true meaning of the term. We adopt the definition given by a recent very able author: "The *à priori* argument may be described as a philosophical attempt to prove that the admission of belief in the existence of a Divine Being is a logical necessity *to the human reason*. As an argument purely rational, this argument is only the statement or enunciation of a necessary form of thought: as combined with a single assumption of *fact*, it is the statement of the conditions under which we view the cognizable universe."¹ Let it be carefully and intelligently observed, that in this definition or description (for it both defines and describes) there is not anything of a wild or extra-

¹ Dove, *The Logic of the Christian Faith*, p. 127.

vagant, or even of a peculiarly vague nature. It gives no opportunity to those who hold and use it rightly, to introduce any peculiarly dangerous subtle fallacy in its very statement, as some suppose; for it cannot be stated as anything else than a necessary form of thought, and every sound thinker can know whether this be true or not. It really, therefore, starts from a safe position, by starting from the necessary form of thought in which every thinker must think.¹

To proceed: The first form of thought is, the conception of EXISTENCE—that is, of *being* in general in its most abstract form. Developing itself into the form of an argument, it proceeds in this manner: *Being* must be either self-existent, that is, *necessary*; or not self-existent, that is, *contingent*. This is the

¹ When we speak of *necessary thoughts*, or *necessary forms of thought*, or *laws of thought*, we generally mean this,—and we cannot mean less than this,—conditions without which thought is impossible, and primary elements which are found essentially inherent in every thought. It is impossible even to imagine thought without a thinker,—a conscious existent intelligence.

Any thinker must have in his *first* distinct thought the conception of *being*, i.e. of *abstract existence*. This is the *first* necessity of thought, but it takes its position as an *axiom* prior to logical thought. If this be the meaning of Descartes in his famous *Cogito, ergo sum*,—I am conscious, therefore I exist, or I am conscious of existence,—and thus an *axiom*, it is true; but if meant *logically*, it has either no meaning, or is a fallacy. The *next* necessity of thought, in relation to being, is *space*. And the *third* is *duration*, or *time*. I would say that duration is a better term than time; for time, properly speaking, is measured duration, and can be conceived of as having beginning and end, whereas duration does not suggest either. Space unbounded is *infinity*; time unbounded is *eternity*. Combined with the conception of being, they give the idea of infinite and eternal being.

These are primary necessities of thought; and we venture to say that no man can think really and intelligibly without them, or exclude them from thought. These, therefore, are the primary and necessary laws and forms of thought.

Further, we have such *mixed abstractions* as power, causation (or cause and effect), liberty, necessity, freedom of the will, partly referable to the mind alone or primarily, partly abstracted from our observation and experience of matter obtained through the senses; but all so connected with the primary intuitions and instincts of reason, that we cannot exclude them from our minds, nor rationally refuse to believe them. And finally, we have the great intuitional conception of Fitness and Order, which in its abstract form is a mental conception, and gives us the important rational principle of design—and that, too, as oneness of design—in the perceived and conceived harmony of the universe.

All these are necessary forms of thought, laws of thought, or axiomatic thinking.

axiomatic basis of the syllogism, affirming that all being must be either necessary or contingent. The very enunciation of this term, however, develops a form of thought which may be termed a *philosophical necessity*, and is the first term in the syllogism in this manner: All *contingent* being must be derived from *necessary* being; because *nothing* cannot originate *something*: being is *positive*; and nothing, or the negation of anything, cannot originate a *positive*. The syllogism now proceeds in the form of a *logical necessity*: if there be contingent existence, there *must* be necessary existence. But there *is* contingent existence, or being; therefore, or consequently, there is necessary existence, or something which subsists in and by itself.

Mark well the character of this argument, and its simplicity:

Axiom: Being must be either self-existent (necessary) or not self-existent (contingent).

First term: All contingent being must be derived from necessary being; so that if there be contingent being, there *must* be necessary being.

Middle term: But there *is* contingent being.

Conclusion: Therefore there must be necessary being.

There is surely nothing peculiarly extravagant or rash in this syllogism—nothing from which the most cautious reasoner need shrink appalled. But it is objected, not only that the argument is abstract, but that it is so purely abstract, that it can give nothing but an abstraction, as its conclusion admitted; but this does not detract from its value as a primary and necessary law of thought, which we not only *can*, but *must* carry with us into all our thinking and all our reasoning. It is further objected, that it has to postulate the element which enables it to become an argument, viz., there *is* contingent existence. But can this be fairly censured as not a legitimate postulate? It is not denied that the axiom of the proposition is a necessary form of thought—so necessary, that it underlies all possible thinking. But in the very term *thought* there is of necessity implied a *thinker*. And this thinker is, in the act of thinking, necessarily conscious of his own existence. No one does really and seriously dispute the intuitive consciousness of self-existence: no person actually either doubts or denies his own existence. Even the sceptic cannot consistently deny

it, without at the same moment ceasing to reason. There is not, therefore, anything illicit in the one sole postulate, *there is contingent existence*; for it is nothing more than the thinker affirming his own existence. It is scarcely worthy of notice that a captious objector may reply: "There is something more, for he affirms *contingent* existence of himself." That he should term his own existence *contingent*, is surely not a very extravagant assumption, and may contrast favourably with the recent German philosophy, which affirms the ALL to be only a modification of the ME.

SEC. II. TRUE CHARACTER OF THE A PRIORI ARGUMENT STATED AND EXPLAINED.

This point seems to deserve a little more consideration on account of its relation to the *à priori* argument. The mind cannot begin to perceive and reflect—that is, to *think*—without the instantaneous rise of self-consciousness. Its first formal thought—that is, its first true and rightly constituted thought—must therefore be an inevitable and indubitable postulate of its own existence, and of its capacity to think, as necessarily having existence, and possessing that power prior to its having that consciousness of being and capacity. This is of the nature of *à priori thinking*—the reflex thought necessarily postulating *à priori being*.

This thinking, then, begins by postulating *self, the thinker*, as soon as it begins to think consciously at all; and it is equally inconsistent with nature, with reason, and with the necessary laws of thought, for it to allow its progress to be arrested by any one asserting, "You are not at liberty to assume your own existence!" But this course of thinking, which will not allow itself to be arrested, assumes in its progress the form of such syllogisms as the following:

I. BEING—*Axiom*: Being must be either self-existent (necessary) or not self-existent (contingent).

First term: All contingent being must be derived from necessary being; so that if there be contingent being, there *must* be necessary being.

Middle term: But there *is* contingent being.

Conclusion: Therefore there *must* be necessary being.

II. SUBSTANCE—*Axiom*: All being must be either *substance* or *quality*.

First term: Being has already been proved to be necessary: all quality or attribute must depend upon, or be attached to, a substance; because *nothing* cannot support a quality. Substance is self-existent; quality is contingent.

Middle term: If there be quality, there must be substance; but there is quality, such as appearance, phenomenal consciousness.

Conclusion: Therefore there is substance; and adding this to the previous argument, there is necessary and self-existent substance.

III. CAUSATION—*Axiom*: All existence is either caused or uncaused.

First term: All caused existence must depend upon, and be derived from, an uncaused existence.

Middle term: If there be caused existence, there must be uncaused existence. There is caused existence.

Conclusion: Therefore there is uncaused, necessary, undervived existence.

Such are the three primary forms which this abstract argument may be made to assume. Each brings us to this alternative: either that there is nothing whatever, or that there must be some undervived, self-existent, positive being. But 'consciousness of self-existence pervades all our thinking, and will not permit us to believe that there is nothing whatever—no universe, no self: therefore we must conclude that there is undervived, self-existent, positive *Being, Substance, Causation*.

Up to this point, it will be seen, the argument is purely abstract, though its postulates contain much yet undeclared meaning. But the argument proceeds, still in accordance with the laws of thought. We have already, in our self-consciousness, the undeveloped idea or conception of *reality*, not merely of substance in the abstract, but of material substance. Now, we cannot conceive of material substance except under the condition of its occupying *space*. Space, let it be observed, is not merely *nothing*; it is the condition of material existence, and assignable portions of it can be measured: neither of these

affirmations could be made of *nothing*. Space is therefore not pure negation.

Axiom: All space is either *finite* or *infinite*.

First term: All finite space must be only a portion of infinite space. If there be finite space, there must be infinite space.

Middle term: There is finite space.

Conclusion: Therefore there is infinite space.

We connect this conclusion with what has previously been obtained. Thus:

Axiom: All existence must be either finite or infinite in space.

First term: All finite existence must be either a portion of, or be dependent on, and derived from, infinite existence.

If there be finite existence in space, there *must* be infinite existence in space.

Middle term: There is finite existence in space.

Conclusion: Therefore there is infinite existence in space.

We thus reach a general conclusion, that if there be existence, and if there be space, there must be an existence, infinite, unlimited, and omnipresent.

A precisely similar argument may be pursued with regard to *time*, as the necessary condition of *change*, and not itself pure negation. The conclusion will be similar, that since there is finite existence in time, there must be existence infinite in time, *i.e. existence eternal*: for if there were not *space*, there could not be *matter*; and if there were not *time*, there could not be *change*—contradictory to all possible consciousness.

It will have been observed, that not only in the case of *self-consciousness* have we used an element that can neither be proved nor rationally doubted or denied; but that also we have stated certain positions as axioms, or self-evident principles, the primary laws of thought, which can neither be proved nor denied. It is of importance to take distinct and intelligent notice of this axiomatic thinking, both because all science must begin by the statement of axioms, and because axiomatic thinking is neither more nor less than *à priori* thinking. It is not fair to condemn *à priori* thinking in the science of natural theology, and to employ it freely in every other science. All

physical science has its *à priori* thinking in the abstractions of mathematics, and yet these abstractions form a sound basis for the support of all physical truth. Although, therefore, there should be the metaphysical abstractions of *à priori* thinking in the basis of natural theology in its scientific form, this could not afford any just ground for refusing to admit its conclusions, if legitimately deduced from axiomatic principles and laws of thought. There is even stronger reason for admitting the *à priori* reasoning of natural theology than there can be for admitting similar reasoning in any other science, because the *à priori* thinking of natural theology includes within it the self-consciousness of the thinker in a far more direct, absolute, and even necessary manner than requires to be done in the axiomatic thinking of any other science. We make these statements generally, in order to suggest both the universality of *à priori* thinking and its inestimable value, as indispensable to all reasoning, the basis of all science, and especially the method by which man becomes enabled to apprehend the true knowledge of himself and of the universe; by means of which, finally, he is enabled to apprehend revelation, and to understand and feel the force of those appeals to both reason and conscience which the infinite and eternal God has addressed to him in the Bible.

Before we quit the region of the necessary postulate—that, viz., of indubitable *self-consciousness*—there is another consideration which must be stated and explained. We are constrained to postulate *being* by self-consciousness. We then conceive of *being* under the necessary conditions of *substance* and *causation*. But in terming self-existent being *substance*, and viewing it merely as the intellect may conceive of it, there is some hazard of gliding into a materialistic Pantheism. It is in this very manner, indeed, and from this very position, that the theory of materialistic Pantheism takes its origin. The unavoidable fact of sensation producing the equally unavoidable fact of perception, arouses consciousness. But consciousness, thus aroused, might attend mainly, if not exclusively, either to the complex state of sensation and perception, and arrive at the equally indubitable belief of an external world and an internal self, or to the simple sensational state alone, which, if it suggested self at all, could suggest it only as a modification of extension and causation. In this latter view, self could not be other than impersonal, acted upon by the external, of which it was only a modified part, and

under the laws of absolute causation. This would be materialistic Pantheism, or rather materialistic Fatalism: this is, Atheism. But self-consciousness, if adequately analyzed and marked in its operations, gives more, much more, than mere sensation, or even conjoint sensation and perception. It has already been constrained to conceive *resistance*; and in conceiving resistance, and becoming conscious of *self*, it obtains inevitably the conception of *self* contending against that *external resistance*; opposing it intentionally, that is, exerting *will*; successfully opposing it, that is, exerting both will and *power*; intentionally, and with deliberate plan and purpose, putting forth will and power, that is, exerting *design*; planning to overcome, and overcoming external resistance, by putting forth its own faculties and powers.

Mark now the position into which self-consciousness has been developed, or the point which our analysis has reached. The *internal being*, the *Me*, is now known as possessing the faculty of *design*, which is *reason* essentially, but also those of *will* and *power*. It must no longer be considered as a mere modification of the external, under the laws of material substance and causation, but as a being conjoined with, yet opposed to, material substance, and possessing causation of its own, which it can *will* into operation and regulate by *design*. We are constrained to give some designation to this *internal self-conscious being*, by which it may be intelligibly distinguished from external existence; and we call it a *person*, or, abstractly considered, *personality*. Some writers seem to include little else in their notion of the term person than that amount of spontaneity in thought and action which is essential to the lowest conception of *will*, and implies a certain degree of freedom. But this is not enough: for animals without reason have at least *will*; and in following their own instinctive impulses, appear to have *somewhat of freedom*. Yet we never call an animal a *person*, not even the sagacious elephant, or the sagacious and affectionate dog. We have already reached *design* in our analysis, and designated that as essentially *reason*. But the conception of *design*, which is the proposing of an end to be attained, and the selection of suitable means for its attainment, contains some notion or regard to the *character* of the end to be attained, and the means to be used, viewed as *good or bad*, as *right or wrong*. There is therefore always a *moral* element in

the conception of *design*. This element arises also in the self-consciousness of the inner being, the *Me*, which instinctively or intuitively attaches the idea of right or wrong, good or evil, to the resistance which it meets, or to its own feelings in contending with that resistance. The idea of *morality* must therefore always be included in the idea or concept of *personality*. A *person* must ever be regarded as a *moral person*; not merely a sentient and percipient being, but a *self-conscious* being; not merely a self-conscious being, but a *thinker*; not merely a thinker, but a *personality* possessing the attributes of *will, power, and design*; and not merely a personality, but a true and consciously *moral person*.

Let it not be said that this is an unnecessary, perhaps a scarcely legitimate, digression. It was necessary in order to explain the true nature of *à priori* thought, and to show that the only *à priori* postulate was not only legitimate, but absolutely inevitable, and is actually assumed in all scientific thinking. This necessarily led us to trace analytically the nature and character of that inevitable postulate. And it is surely no slight gain, to find that in our basis of *à priori* thought we legitimately obtain the conception of moral personality. The rich and pregnant value of this conception we shall have occasion more fully to explore in a future stage of our process. But even now we cannot refrain from suggesting some of the views which we may obtain. It is a logical necessity of thought, that if there be finite being, there must be infinite being; if there be caused existence, there must be uncaused existence. By the same logical necessity, if there be a finite moral person, there must be an infinite moral person. A right use of this conception in sound argument will therefore not only free us from the hazard of being led to adopt the materialistic Pantheism to which we have already alluded, but will also introduce the great conception of infinite moral personality, and thus prepare us for receiving the true conception of the One Infinite and Eternal Personal God! We have, however, much more to say before even this department of our high argument is closed; but we think it right to indicate now the direction in which it points, and the conclusion to which we may hope it will contribute to lead. This surely ought to induce us to study carefully true *à priori* thought and reasoning.

We have already shown that true *à priori* thought demands,

and will not be refused—cannot be refused—the inevitable postulate of a *thinker*. But we have shown also, that while the postulate must be, in the first instance, a finite thinker,—a finite being, whose essence is *thought*, and whose attributes are *will, power, and design*; whose essence and attributes therefore constitute *moral personality finite*,—the necessary reasoned result is, that there must be an *infinite moral personality*. This, however, we readily admit, is after all only a reasoned inference, although an inevitable one. It is HUMAN *à priori* thinking—that is, it is necessarily derived, because our own existence is derived; and it can only point back to the necessarily underived, uncaused, Eternal. It thus tells us, with reverentially bended head and humble voice, that absolute *à priori* thinking is possible only to the absolute underived Being—to GOD. And its most profound thought expresses itself in the deep longings of solemn prayer that HE would reveal Himself; for while by its earnest researches it may obtain reason for the irresistible and universal belief that GOD IS, it must ever humbly own that it cannot by searching find out GOD HIMSELF—cannot find out the Almighty unto perfection.

It feels, and by feeling it knows in its own deepest consciousness, that there must be thinking being—there must be real thinking being, a real substance—a *substantia*—a *ὑπόστασις*—to underlie thought, to give thought form, and law, and continuity of existence; otherwise there could be no retained thought, no formed thought, no systematized thought, no real thought, no such conception as continuous resistance or continued self-consciousness—nothing but dim shadows drifting after dim shadows into a limitless void, and being lost in utter oblivion. But the human mind has self-consciousness, and in that a finite *substantia* underlying all thought, giving form to all thought and reality to the conception of being, though finite; and in this it has, in a begun and personal embodiment, the prophecy of the INFINITE, ETERNAL, PERSONAL GOD, the *source of all being*.

SEC. III. THEORIES OF DR. S. CLARKE, DESCARTES, ETC.

Before proceeding to state the results of what we regard as true *à priori* thinking in the science of Natural Theology, it seems desirable and right to present an outline of some of the most important treatises which have been produced in this department.

Of all these, by far the most celebrated is the work of Dr. S. Clarke. That celebrated work was produced in the year 1704, and was ere long followed by the *Boyle Lecture* of the same author, directed to a similar course of thought. We shall be the better able to apprehend some of the special aspects of Dr. Clarke's great work, by directing some preliminary attention to the state of philosophical thinking, to meet which it was produced.

Not long after the philosophical writings of Lord Bacon set the human mind free from the thralldom of scholasticism, a new era of philosophy arose, and boldly sought to bring the whole regions of being within its domains. At the head of this new career of philosophy we must place *Descartes*, not certainly with regard to his speculations relative to creation and its vortices, but with regard to his boldly taking the fact of self-conscious thought—" *Cogito, ergo sum*"—as the basis of all philosophy and philosophical investigation. There was a great and dangerous error in the very next step of his course, and he fell into that error in the view which he took of *substance*. Even in his own hands that error led him to entertain a materialistic and fatalistic notion of the universe. This notion was soon taken up by *Spinoza*, and carried forward to all its consequences without the least scruple, and by the rigid application of a wonderful logic, the power of which was irresistible in its own linked concatenations.

The speculative philosophy of the Continent soon began to be introduced into Britain, influencing also the British mind, but doing so in accordance with the nature of the British mind. The mind of Britain is so essentially practical, that it cannot be satisfied with anything till it have ascertained what it can *do*,—what is the *use* of it. Speculative philosophy became *Deism* in Britain, and began to claim both the power and the right to give body and form to religious belief. English Deists began by making very strong professions of religious feeling and respect for religious truth, but asserted that their profound knowledge of nature and nature's laws enabled them to produce a *natural religion* more profound, universal, and true than Christianity, and of course superseding Christianity in their estimation. It soon became evident to the defenders of Christianity that these philosophical arguments must be met, and that they could be met only by a deeper and more true

philosophy, deduced from the same regions of thought from which they had drawn their origin. The necessity of adopting this course had been clearly seen by the Honourable Robert Boyle, who founded a lectureship for this very purpose.¹

It was in these circumstances, and to meet the necessities thus produced, that Dr. Samuel Clarke undertook the task and wrote the work which has rendered his name perpetually illustrious. The essence of Dr. Clarke's argument has been stated with such brevity and precision by Dugald Stewart, that I cannot do better than give it in his words: "The argument *à priori* has been enforced with singular ingenuity by Dr. Clarke, whose particular manner of stating it seems to have been suggested to him by the following passage in Newton's *Principia*: 'Æternus est et infinitus, omnipotens et omnisciens ;

¹ Although my intention is to direct attention chiefly to Dr. Clarke's argument, it may be interesting to mention briefly some instances of an almost identical line of thought pursued by other authors. The tenth chapter of Locke's Fourth Book has, in its fundamental proposition, a close resemblance to Clarke's *Demonstration*, and also contains essentially the element which we regard the true basis of an *à priori* argument: "Nothing can no more produce any real being, than it can be equal to two right angles" (*Essay*, Book iv. chap. 10). From this and the knowledge we have of our own existence, it is shown to follow that "from eternity there has been something; that this eternal Being must be most powerful and most knowing, therefore God." The difference between Locke and Clarke consists in this, that Locke states in his fundamental proposition our knowledge of our own existence; and in this, we think, he takes right ground.

Cudworth, in his great work published above twenty years before that of Clarke, argues thus against the atheistic system of Democritus: "If space be indeed a nature distinct from body, and a thing really incorporeal, then will it undeniably follow from this very principle of theirs, that there must be an incorporeal substance, and (this space being supposed by them to be also infinite) an infinite incorporeal Deity. Because, if space be not the extension of body, nor an affection thereof, then must it of necessity be either an accident existing alone by itself without a substance, which is impossible, or else the extension or affection of some other incorporeal substance which is infinite." *Intell. System*, iii. p. 231, Lond. ed. This is almost identical with Clarke's argument, and may possibly have suggested it to him, though he does not refer to it, nor does it seem to have produced any effect upon the minds of his contemporaries. But the work in which it is found is so voluminous, and so full of learning and thought, that many an important idea may have been suggested by its perusal, while yet the man who took the hint might not have been able again to find it in that huge treasury of lore.

id est, durat, ab æterno in æternum, et adest ab infinito in infinitum. Non est æternitas et infinitas, sed æternus et infinitus; non est duratio et spatium, sed durat et adest. Durat semper, et adest ubique; et existendo semper et ubique, durationem et spatium constituit.' Proceeding on the same principles, Dr. Clarke argues that 'space and time are only abstract conceptions of an immensity and eternity, which force themselves on our belief; and as immensity and eternity are not substances, they must be the attributes of a Being who is necessarily immense and eternal.'"¹ Dugald Stewart states also Reid's modest expression of doubt whether this argument be as solid as it is sublime, and leaves us to suppose that he entertained a similar doubt. Brown passes beyond the region of doubt, and expresses dissent from the validity of the *à priori* argument, declaring his decided preference for the *à posteriori* method. Even Dr. Chalmers not only agrees in the main with Brown, but states some fallacies, as he deems them, in Dr. Clarke's argument.

The first fallacy with which Dr. Chalmers charges the *à priori* argument, as stated by Dr. Clarke, is, that "the logical is made to be identical with, or made to be the test and the measure of, the actual or the physical necessity."² In arguing out this objection, Dr. Chalmers seems to us to have ascribed to Dr. Clarke an assumption which he did not make. The basis of Dr. Clarke's argument is, "*that something* has existed from all eternity." This is declared to be necessary, indisputable, and not capable of being denied without a contradiction in terms: "For since *something* now *is*, it is manifest that something always *was*; otherwise, the things that *now are* must have been produced out of *nothing*, absolutely, and *without a cause*."³ In illustrating this undeniable proposition, Dr. Clarke refers to such axiomatic and necessary mathematical truths as no person can deny, but must admit to be eternally true, even though there never had been a created universe. He does not, however, place even such axiomatic truths on an equality with his first truth; because, as truths of thought, mental truths, they could not be supposed to exist without pre-existent mind. He then proceeds to show that there is no con-

¹ Stewart, *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*, Book iii. ch. i., *Collected Works*, vol. vii. p. 8.

² Chalmers, *Natural Theology*, p. 104.

³ Clarke's *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, p. 8.

tradiction in terms, though we were to suppose the material universe either non-existent, or different from what it is; and from this he concludes, that the material universe has not its cause of existence in itself, and is not therefore necessarily existent. This method of argument was probably directed by Clarke strongly against the notion of the eternity of matter, or substance,—such material and substantive being as Spinoza had endeavoured to reason out into a pantheistic nature—God. It may be that Clarke applied his argument more forcibly in that direction than was either necessary, or so conclusive as when it kept more within the proper thought-domain of *à priori* reasoning; but we do not admit that it contains any such fallacy as to render it invalid. It appears to me, on the other hand, that had Dr. Chalmers adverted to the special aspect of the deistic theories with which Clarke had to contend, he would have seen the reason why the *à priori* argument was directed so strongly, yet not fallaciously, against materialism.

But Dr. Chalmers specifies a second fallacy, and that too of a kind which must be fatal to the argument, if the objection be not itself somewhat fallacious. “What is that,” he asks, “in the whole compass of thought, whose existence must force itself upon the mind, and whose non-existence involves that contradiction which the mind, with all its efforts, cannot possibly admit into its belief? The answer is, Space and time.” To this bare position the argument is reduced by Dr. Chalmers; and to this he says: “It is here that the *non sequitur* lies.” “We can imagine an infinite nothing; nor do we feel that in so doing we imagine eternity and immensity removed out of the universe, while they at the same time continue there.”¹ That there is a fallacy here, there can be little doubt; but we apprehend the fallacy lies in the objection, not in the argument. Let the question be asked, How do we conceive space and time? The answer, we apprehend, must be, By means of the perceptions of *being* and *action*; for all substantive or real being exists in space, and all *action* takes place in time. Space and time, then, are never conceived of in any other way than as conditions of being and action. Further, these conceptions are consequent upon the previous conceptions of self-consciousness, and could neither come into even ideal conception, nor be retained as necessary forms of thought wherewith to conceive

¹ Chalmers, *Natural Theology*, pp. 106-8.

of being and action, or existence and causation, without the continued self-consciousness in which they inhere. Can any thinker, then, conceive of space and time *boundless*,—of immensity and eternity, in any other way than he conceives of space and time *finite*,—that is, as modes of an existent self-conscious being? If he try to think space and time out of existence, he must begin by thinking himself out of existence, and yet think that he is still thinking! *This* no thinker ever did, or can ever do; for in all his thinking there must ever be the admission of thinker, and by necessity the admission of both time and space,—which yet are only modes of being, as they came into existence only as thought-modes of his own being. We conclude, therefore, that the charge of the fallacy of a *non sequitur* here is itself fallacious; and that it arose out of the incompleteness of the analysis of the conceptions of time and space, which had not traced them out to their real origin and nature. We may add, that Dr. Clarke himself makes carefully a distinction between the concepts *time* and *space*, and what are true *attributes*; so that, while he might continue to designate them attributes of *being*, he did not regard them as attributes in the same sense as power, wisdom, goodness, etc., were,—that is, he really regarded them as *conditions* of being, not its characteristics—modes of existing necessarily inherent in a necessary existence; or, as we would now say, *necessary modes of thought* inherent in a *necessary thinker*. But Dr. Chalmers had never directed his mind specially to what men term metaphysical thinking; while, on the other hand, he was profoundly conversant with physical science and its laws, and felt that he could produce the *à posteriori* argument for the being and attributes of God in full and irresistible strength. For that reason, he was rather more than willing to abandon the *à priori* argument,—even to discountenance it,—that he might pursue his own course unembarrassed, with all his giant might. Yet there are minds as specially addicted to *à priori* thought, to whom that line of argument will be more convincing than any argument based on the phenomena and the laws of physical nature could ever be; and we are therefore inclined to retain the *à priori* argument, and not only to retain it, but to clear away from it all the misstatements and misapprehensions which have been allowed to gather round it, and have abated its clearness and its power. We may add, that the transcen-

dental thinking of Germany can neither be understood nor answered without some considerable attention to the department of *à priori* thought; and as it is from Germany that most of the recent insidious attacks on the Christian faith have come, we think it our duty to meet the enemy on his own ground, and to do what we can to foil him with his own weapons.

We have already referred to the philosophy of Descartes, as giving direction to what is now generally designated *subjective* philosophy; and we are inclined to make a few passing remarks on that philosophy, because some have termed it the basis of all *à priori* reasoning. The primary position of Descartes was indeed the starting-point of modern metaphysics, making the *consciousness* of the human mind the primary element of all its knowledge. His position amounted to this: that the very moment there are phenomena of any kind within our consciousness, that moment the mind becomes cognizant of its own existence; and that were there no consciousness, there would be no possible evidence of an intelligent principle. Thought, thus understood, includes both the thought itself and a thinking being—both a subject and an object. From this natural division there arises the possibility of analyzing both mind and matter—psychology and perception. Our consciously conceived ideas are thus subject to examination, and it becomes of the utmost importance to obtain some criterion by which the *true* can be distinguished from the *false*. This criterion Descartes thought to consist in “clearness and distinctness.” This also is essentially an appeal to consciousness. But this criterion he applied also to the idea of God, in this manner: Clear ideas are always *objectively true*, that is, there is a *reality* to which they correspond: the idea of an all-perfect infinite Being is without controversy clearly in my mind: this conception could not have come from the finite and imperfect; but I have that idea incontestably and clearly: therefore, since I have the clear idea of a God, a God must necessarily exist. Such is the argument given by Descartes; but it is evident that it is not the argument of Dr. Clarke. Descartes gave, however, also an *ontological* argument in proof of the being of God, to the following effect: The existence of God is implied in the very nature of the idea we have of Him, as is the existence of a triangle in the conception of a triangle. Necessary existence is contained in the nature of the idea of God: therefore God necessarily exists.

That there is in this attempted ontological argument a fallacious assumption of the point to be proved, is evident enough; but it is not evident that this argument is identical with that which Dr. Clarke elaborated. The Cartesian ontological argument, as it is called, is not, in our opinion, truly ontological; for it is an attempt to reason from an idea, or concept, to a reality, which is necessarily impossible,—unless, indeed, the reasoner carry with him avowedly the consciousness of his own existence, and the appeal to that consciousness as the connecting link between the idea and the reality, which, however, Descartes did not attempt to do. For these reasons, and for others which might easily be stated, we do not admit the Cartesian argument as a true *à priori* argument; and in a subsequent part of our course we may take occasion to point out more definitely the manner and position in which it received that vitiating fallacy, by which it was perverted into an argument on behalf of materialistic Pantheism.

Since the time of Descartes, the philosophical mind of the Continent has been marvellously developed in all directions, and has sought to explore every line of thought. In many departments its success has been very great; but not so in its use of *à priori* thinking to prove the existence and the attributes of God. By some of the great German thinkers the argument has been carried away into the regions of the ideal, to such a degree that all possible knowledge of the real is denied. By others, the *subjective*—the *Ego*, or the *Me*—has been produced till it has become the final sum, “the bright consummate flower” of the universe,—the consciousness of the *Ego* being regarded as *God become conscious of Himself in man*. This is a strange Pantheism—a strange idolatry. It is a Pantheism, for *all* is *God*, and *God* is *all*; yet this *All-God* is *man*. It is therefore an idolatry, yet a strange idolatry; for it is not man deified, but *God humanized*, and yet *God still*. It is not the ancient nature-worship or deified man-worship of earlier heathen ages; but it is the hero-worship of idealized humanity. To show how all this has sprung of extreme subjective philosophy, deprived by its modern cultivators of at least one most important element, and to point out why this all-important element was left out, or thrown designedly out, will engage our attention when we come to deal with some of the spurious forms of thinking which come into collision with Natural Theology.

In England there has not been much done in the regions of philosophico-theological disquisition since the time of Bishop Butler, till of late. But that eminent man established some points in the world of high and true thought which can never be subverted, at least not in the British mind; and if not in the British mind, ultimately not in the mind of the thinking world.

The recently departed great Scottish philosopher, Sir William Hamilton, not only maintained the renown of Scottish thought, but gave to Scottish philosophy such additional clearness, precision, and strength of thought and expression, as has raised it to a position of ascendancy in the philosophic mind throughout the world of thoughtful men. Yet even in his philosophy may be traced a vitiating blank, similar in nature to that which we hinted at with reference to nearly all continental philosophy. To this point also we shall subsequently direct special attention.

The profound study of mental philosophy cannot cease to engage the earnest attention of all meditative men. They *will* think; they *must* think; and they cannot think long and deeply without *thinking of God*—of that Supreme Being in whom they live, and move, and have their being. Their philosophy must necessarily enter into the regions of Natural Theology; and in that region may work, as it has formerly wrought, wild havoc, unless it be calmly met, fairly encountered, its errors detected and removed, and all its true thoughts received and dedicated to the service of revealed truth. This, we believe, both may be done and will be done, and that, too, without much of the turmoil of controversy, or the noise of boastful shouts of victory. Long has the secular mind been in the habit of pluming itself on the calmness, serenity, and peacefulness of its philosophical disquisitions on all manner of subjects, while it indulged in scornful complaint of the bitterness of theological polemics. With what truth these self-laudations were employed, and these accusations uttered, we do not think it at all necessary to say. But we shall endeavour to avoid all unnecessary asperity of language, while with unhesitating fearlessness we confront every opponent of what we deem not only truth, but saving truth, and firmly prosecute our task of refuting error and maintaining sacred truth and faith, not merely on grounds that nature and sound reason furnish, but

also on the higher and holier grounds that God has vouchsafed to reveal.

Before we pass from this brief disquisition respecting *à priori* thought, and the various attempts that have been made to state a true and conclusive *à priori* argument for the being and attributes of God, we think it right to say, that even though it should be found utterly impossible to produce a true *à priori* argument, our inquiries into subjects of such elevation and dignity cannot fail to be of great mental value; and if we duly guard against the admission of any hostile and disturbing elements into our minds, we shall be the better prepared for the reception of the final and absolute *à priori* thinking contained in the Bible—the thinking which has come direct from God Himself. There is at the very least this peculiar value in *à priori* or *axiomatic* thinking, that if its primary positions cannot be *proved*, neither can they be *refuted*. It is impossible for any man, by prosecuting axiomatic thinking, to become an *atheist*, until he has succeeded in *denying his own existence*. He must first annihilate himself; and as in doing so, or saying he does so, he must also at the same time annihilate the thought with the thinker, he ceases in the moment to be an atheist—he is only *a nothing, a nonentity*: for axiomatic thinking enters into depths far more profound and true than the shallow superficialities of Atheism. In the heart of the human consciousness it fixes its deep and ineradicable root of primary investigation, and compels a man to stand face to face with his own moral soul and nature, in its reverential feeling of responsibility. This is our impregnable position. Here we begin our inquiry. If we shall find enough to convince us that there is in man a spiritual essence united to a material body, which renders him the very synthesis of mind and matter, we may then think it no more strange that he cannot refuse to believe the highest intuitions of his mind, than that he cannot refuse to believe the plainest intimations of his senses, even though he should not be able to demonstrate their truth in either case; and as he receives the evidence of his senses with most direct conviction of their truth when he is in contact with external nature, so he will receive the evidence of his mental intuitions with most direct conviction of their truth when he is engaged in spiritual converse with God. His true *à priori* demonstration will be, when *reason* stands reverentially face to face with

faith, when the *soul* kneels humbly in fervent adoration before its GOD.

SEC. IV. THE VALUE OF THE A PRIORI ARGUMENT.

Various statements have been already made explanatory of the true nature of a true *à priori* argument; but as it may conduce to clearness, it seems expedient to bring together into one connected whole these explanatory remarks.

No sooner has the element or principle of self-consciousness been aroused in the human being, than he is constrained not only to believe his own existence, but also to put certain important and primary questions to himself, such as, *What am I? Where am I? How came I to be, and to be here?* These questions suggest inevitably the three great and primary elements of all our knowledge; viz., *first*, the *idea of our own existence*, or of finite mind in general; *secondly*, the *idea of external nature*; and *thirdly*, the *idea of the absolute and eternal*, as manifested in the conceptions of pure reason. We begin to think when we begin consciously to observe; and in beginning to think, the earliest form of thought must contain in it the *consciousness of self*, and the *perception of something which is not self*. Many an error may take place in our early attempts to expand, apply, and understand these primary ideas, so as to form them not only into a true knowledge, but into a true *philosophy of knowledge*. We may puzzle ourselves long about the questions concerning the trustworthiness of our senses, and the value of our perceptions, in making us acquainted with external nature; and regarding these questions scepticism has long exercised its ingenious faculty for doubting, yet never really doubted the actual existence of external nature, all the time that it was arguing that no proof could be given of its existence. Not less difficult may be, and has been, the task to satisfy the doubter with proof of our own existence, although of course no man in his senses ever really doubted the actual existence both of himself and of other men. Disputations on such points might be allowed, so long as they amounted to little more than the intellectual amusements of idle men; but when they are employed to sap the foundations of morality and religion, they assume a dangerous character, and render it necessary to meet them and examine their real nature and tendency.

The greatest danger to morality and religion, however, has always resided in the application of the sceptic's sophistry to man's idea of the *absolute* and the *eternal*, as apprehended by the conceptions of pure reason. If scepticism cannot banish that great idea, it will try to transmute it into either an *ideal Pantheism* or a *material Pantheism*; and in either case there can be no true foundation for morality and religion. And here let it be noted, that while scepticism about the real, or rather the *proved*, existence of man and nature cannot greatly affect common morality, because men *will* believe in their own existence and in that of external nature, despite all the sophistry of all the sceptics; yet scepticism regarding the existence of the absolute, the infinite, the eternal, has always been readily received by many, and has always proved to be a formidable foe to morality and religion, were it only by setting men loose from all restraints imposed by the indefinite dread of *future retribution*. Into the reason why scepticism so pertinaciously tries to preserve this ground, we shall inquire subsequently; meanwhile we direct attention to the fact.

Now, it is with regard to this last-mentioned department of man's primary fountain of thought and knowledge, that the *à priori* argument claims to be of special value. There is a necessary sequence in thought suggesting in every thought the question, whether that thought was an absolutely primitive thought, or whether it originated in a *prior* thought, *prior* state, or *prior* being. This impels the mind to engage in tracing every thought back, and back, and still further back, in search of an *absolutely first thought*; nor can it be satisfied till it either ascertain that first thought, or become assured that it cannot be ascertained. Nay, let it be frankly stated, that should the inquiry be constrained to stop because the first thought cannot be ascertained, the inquiring mind is *not* satisfied with such a result; and while it stops, it does so with a feeling of disappointment at a result so unsatisfactory. It seems, then, that the element of *à priori thinking* is natural, and even necessary to the human mind—the ultimate form of thought which it seeks to attain. Man stands on the narrow isthmus of the present *now*, between the two *eternities*, the *past* and the *future*. His restless, indefatigable, wandering thoughts connect him with both. The *future* he imagines he can conceive and may inherit, because it seems easy to suppose that what now exists may

continue to exist for ever. But back into the past, the dark priority of an *unbeginning eternity*, from which his own beginning sprang,—into that mysterious region he cannot pierce; and yet he *must* attempt it, so fascinated is he with its unfathomable grandeur. There is, there must be, he thinks, an unbeginning eternity: *not* an eternity of *nothingness*, for that affords no actual beginning, or cause of beginning, to existing things; but an Eternal—a Being of whom eternity of existence is the essential characteristic. Of any other thing or being I can ask, What was before it? Of such a Being I can say, He always *was*, and always *is*, and always *will be*—Himself the *First*, the *Present*, the *Last*, the *ETERNAL*.

This is *à priori* thinking; and while this kind of thinking is absolutely an inevitable necessity for the human mind, with its wonderful far-searching faculties and powers, the only question is, Can this necessity of *à priori* thinking be reduced to the form of an *à priori* argument? And if it can, how far can it carry the inquiry relative to the being and attributes of God? The chief objection which has been urged against the *à priori* argument is, that it cannot be so stated as to carry the conclusion of *absolute being*, without at least *one assumption*, or postulate, which may be refused, and therefore that it cannot prove absolute and necessary being.¹ We have already cast the *à priori* argument into several syllogistic forms. Let us try another, as an illustration of our present reasoning on the subject; premising only, that we hold ourselves entitled, from the indubitable element of self-consciousness, to commence with the idea, not of *being* merely, but of *personality*.

¹ The one postulate, it will be remembered, is, "There *is* finite being." When any man attempts to dispute or deny that postulate, he may be fairly asked to explain what he means, or thinks he means. Does he mean to dispute or deny his own existence, and yet think that he is thinking, and not an existent thinker,—a *thought* perhaps, but *not a thinker*? No man ever did, or ever could, either *think* or *believe* such an *unintelligible absurdity*; no man therefore ever did, or ever can, intelligibly dispute our postulate, which accordingly takes the position of being itself a *necessity* rather than a *postulate*. I am really anxious to press this thought; both because many good thinkers, and fair and honest-minded men, shrink from venturing to use the *à priori* argument, because it has got a bad reputation from having been often misused, and still more often misunderstood; and also because, when thus left by the friends of truth, it falls into the hands exclusively of the perverters of truth, by whom it is dexterously employed in their fallacious reasoning. Being essentially axiomatic, it cannot be met

Axiom: All persons must be either self-existent or not self-existent.

First term: Since all persons not self-existent must derive their existence from a self-existent person, if there be a person not self-existent, there must be a person self-existent.

Middle term: I am a person not self-existent.

Conclusion: Therefore there is a self-existent person.

Now the only part of this syllogistic argument that can be called an assumption, is the middle term, "I am a person not self-existent." Is this an illegitimate assumption? Can any man that uses it deny it? Or can any one who hears it deny it? If a man were so to deny it, as to say, "I am not a person," would any other man think it worth while to argue with him? Or if he were to say, "You cannot *prove* that I am a person," would any other man feel that his argument was invalid, till he had proved the personality of the objector? The appeal to the principle of self-consciousness is direct and absolute, and its answer equally direct and absolute, in the case of every sane and honest mind; so that we are entitled to repel the objection as a mere cavil, and to hold the argument valid and conclusive. We thus pass immediately from the fact of our conscious personal existence to the admission of a self-existent person, *as present to our reason, whenever we reflect, as our own personality is to our own consciousness.* Such, in our opinion, is the conclusion to which a true *à priori* argument, rightly understood and rightly stated, ought inevitably to lead us, in the region of necessary thought and reason.

by any reasoning which is not axiomatic; and therefore no process of merely logical reasoning can be of the least avail against its lofty and imposing pretensions. It can be answered only by piercing still deeper into the region of axiomatic thinking, reaching a basis more profoundly true, and from that primary position destroying its dark sophistry. It is not possible for any man honestly to doubt or deny his own existence, and on the strength of that dishonest denial to denounce what he ventures to call the unwarranted postulate of axiomatic thinking, "There is finite being." The man who will perseveringly venture to deny this inevitable thought may be demanded to state on what ground he does so. Does he presume to do so, on the monstrous assumption that he himself is *infinite being*, and thence *knows* that finite being does not exist? Or does he deny that he himself exists? The one postulate, as they term it, is not a postulate; it is an *absolute necessity of thought*.

We might proceed to trace the power which this inevitable *à priori* thinking and reasoning has displayed throughout the world, and in all ages, in constraining mankind to believe in the existence of a God, and to worship, in one way or other, the God in whose existence they could not but believe. Every man admits his own personality, nay *asserts* it, and will not consent to be regarded only as a *thing*, an *animal*, or a *slave*. But what is personality? What is a person? To be a person, there must not only be individual *will*, the power of acting from one's own centre of being, with at least some measure of *freedom*; but there must also be the perception of right and wrong, good and evil,—that is, there must be a *moral element*. A person, then, must be a *rational intelligence*, possessing the high mental faculties of *moral will* and *moral consciousness*. Nothing short of this can give a right and adequate idea of a person. The idea of personality in its finite form implying necessarily Personality Finite, must also imply the responsibility of the derived and finite person to the Underived and Infinite Person—the responsibility of man to God. Thence must follow religion and religious worship. But while there must be religion and religious worship, by the necessity of consciousness and *à priori* thought, the kind of religion and religious worship will depend on the idea which man entertains of God. This, again, will depend on the mental and moral state, and consciousness of men and nations, in the absence of revelation. And as we are not at present in the region of revelation, so far as our argument is concerned, we are entitled to say that such as a nation is, such will be its religion and its gods. If we could know with precision and certainty the mental, moral, and social state of any people, we might tell what their religion must be; and conversely, if we knew with precision the character of the religion of any people, we might tell what must be the mental, moral, and social state of that people. We refer in passing to the Mohammedans, to the Hindus, to the Chinese, to the Africans; and in each instance we see the congruity of the religion with the character of the people: fierce and remorseless cruelty in those whose religious creed is also their wild war-cry, “The sword or the Koran;” monstrous falsehood, perfidy, and revenge, in those who worship monstrous gods, and accept the huge fables of Hinduism; the despicable and atrocious mingling of folly, fraud, and disregard of life, in those who

follow the baseless system of Buddh; and the deepest degradation, crime, and misery, in those who place their religion in the unintelligible incantations addressed to some Fetish. But enough: the mere reference to such topics will serve to indicate the power of *à priori* thinking, so far as it is thinking, or superstitious instinct, so far as the principle acts, impulsively and without thought, on mankind in every age and country.

It will readily be perceived that we attach more value to both the *à priori* argument and to what we term *à priori thinking*, or *axiomatic thinking*, than is generally done. It will also be perceived that, in our method of at once stating and explaining this kind of reasoning, we are not exposed to the accusation of passing illegitimately from the region of abstract ideas into that of actual existence; because the true *à priori* line of thought and argument is never in our method one of abstract idea. It arises, we hold, necessarily out of the *first form of finite thought, self-consciousness*, or the consciousness of each person that he is a finite but a real existence; and it carries with it most legitimately the conception of *being*, of *actual existence*, into every other possible region of thought. It needs no assumption which could be refused, no postulate which might not be granted, in order to have a bridge from the abstract to the real; for it is *itself that bridge*: it is *its own assumption, its own postulate*. And while we are not surprised that the earliest advocates of the *à priori* argument failed to span the chasm between the abstract idea and the actual reality, and thus failed to carry the conviction of their cautious readers, because the philosophy of mind was then but indefinite and immature,—we are at the same time decidedly of opinion that, by the addition of the modern improved and verified philosophy of mind, the *à priori* line of reasoning may not only be restored to Natural Theology, but may be made to afford one of its most impregnable defences. In connection with this view, we may state that, while carefully pursuing a recent very acute metaphysical treatise on the *Theory of Knowing and Being*,¹ we felt gratified to notice not only the tone of sincere respect with which this very able and acute metaphysician always wrote of religion, but also, and especially, were we gratified to feel certain, that whatever havoc his reasoning might work among metaphysical writings, it actually tended to produce a

¹ By the late Professor Ferrier of St. Andrews.

basis for the *à priori* argument, by introducing a necessary personality into all thought and all knowledge, thereby leaving no chasm between the abstract ideal and the existing real or concrete. We do not of course express any opinion relative to the metaphysical value or soundness of the purely metaphysical arguments and inferences contained in that work, though we may have occasion to refer to some of them again; but we regard it as at least an omen of good, when we find metaphysical research tending to confirm the *à priori* argument in proof of the being of the Infinite and Eternal Personal God.

To this extent, then, we think a true *à priori* argument, regarded as the solution of a problem already believed, but requiring to be solved, so far as that can be done by human thought and reason, both can carry, and has carried, us in our attempt to solve that problem. As certainly as man is an existing, finite, self-conscious, moral, and personal being, so certainly there is an existing, infinite, intelligent, moral, and personal God, from whose eternal self-existence man derived his finite existence, from whose infinitely wise and holy moral being and character man obtained the finite, rational, and moral nature by which he is distinguished, on whose abounding and infinite goodness and protecting providence man is ever dependent, and to whom, as the Author of our existence, man is ever responsible.

These, certainly, are vast and most important conclusions to which to be led by this line of argument, and they must be admitted to be contributions of inestimable value to the science of Natural Theology. They are also, as we hold, of adamant strength, and furnish a firm basis, so far as they go, on which to erect that first and most important of all sciences,—the science of eternal truth,—the science of our knowledge of God, and of our relation to Him.

But we find, also, that this course of argument is almost exclusively limited to the region of lofty thought, and has scarcely anything to do with the vast realms of positive material existence which spread so universally around us. To the man whom God has gifted with the power of recondite thought, this argument will always be peculiarly convincing; but to by far the greater part of mankind it will be found of so abstract a nature as to be absolutely beyond their powers of apprehension. The language which we are constrained to use in stating and illus-

trating it, will generally seem to such persons unintelligible; and the thoughts which such language strives to embody, will seem to them to have no meaning at all. Even such people, however, may be able to perceive, that when the defender of Christianity finds it necessary, or thinks it expedient, to meet the assailant in the regions of abstract thought, he is able to traverse these shadowy regions with as firm and fearless a step, and to use these abstract arguments with as much skill and power, as can any of his antagonists. This may be of great value to him, even though he should not be able to comprehend the reasoning; for he may feel all the more confidence in the plainer reasoning which he can comprehend. He may thus actually share in the victory, although unable to take any part in the conflict. And further, as the age in which it is our lot to live is one of deep research, of great inquisitiveness, and little characterized by reverence for anything that can plead little more than hereditary and long-existent claims to respect and credit, it is an age in which it is peculiarly necessary for every Christian man, especially for every Christian minister, to be able to take up every line of argument, and thus meet every opponent on that opponent's own chosen ground. If continental theories about the *Me* and the *not-Me* must and will be brought forward as something very new and vastly profound, the defender of Christianity should be able to use intelligently the same language, explore the thoughts which it assumes to convey—perhaps means to conceal—take captive the philosophy, so far as it is true, and employ it in the service of true religion, not in the exposition of the gospel, which admits not such foreign phraseology, but in the science of Natural Theology, where it may seem less unsuitable.

There is yet one thought which, before concluding this section, we think it right to express. When we leave the sphere of *à priori* thought and argument, and enter into one less abstract, we have no intention to leave also behind us any of the truths that we have acquired in that high sphere. We mean to take them all along with us into every other region we may have occasion to enter. When the mental philosopher has, by means of his searching analysis, ascertained the true laws of thought, and the fundamental principles of knowledge and belief, he returns into more common regions of inquiry, and employs the principles, the laws, and the skill which he has

acquired in the pursuit of all other knowledge. This gives him immense power in every subsequent investigation, and enables him to make great and rapid progress with the use of his fine weapons and his well-trained mind. In like manner, it is our intention to carry with us the well-proved results and well-trained power of *à priori* thinking, and to make use of these acquisitions in our future argument. We may find, that though we have scarcely yet made any intelligent acquaintance with external nature, and not a very full acquaintance with even our own inner self-consciousness, we have nevertheless obtained some knowledge of those forms and laws of thought, into which all the intimations of external nature, and all that our own self-consciousness can teach, must necessarily be cast. We have felt ourselves placed in the dread presence of the one holy, infinite, eternal, personal God, in no dim abstraction, but in our own personality constrained to apprehend—not comprehend—His personality. And in our deep adoring awe and reverential fear, we have been constrained to breathe the humble prayer that He would vouchsafe to make Himself more thoroughly known to us, and satisfy our already longing souls with the gracious treasures of that highest knowledge.

Does not the reverential longing and adoring soul already seem to hear,—as only supplicating souls *can* hear,—in its deepest consciousness a solemn voice, which seems to say, “The volume of nature is open before you—the widespread volume of God’s works—go and peruse it: go, with the ideas of your own self-consciousness, and of God, which you have already partially acquired; go, with the light of those ascertained intuitions shining around you and on your path; go, with your perceptive faculties all awakened and enlightened, to receive what it may impart;—go thus, because God is before you there, and because going thus you may expect that He will there reveal Himself to you more fully, and thereby prepare you for future revelations still more clear and glorious!”

Such a result of *à priori thinking* is indeed of inestimable value.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARGUMENT A POSTERIORI.



FEW preliminary sentences may be of advantage for enabling us distinctly to apprehend the position into which we have advanced, and the nature of the argument into the consideration of which we are now about to enter. The first position which we can possibly occupy, or even conceive ourselves to occupy, is that given by *self-consciousness*. In this position a man may be rationally conceived of as saying to himself, or as thinking, "*I am, I exist, and know that I exist,*" but nothing more. This would of itself be merely the *consciousness of existence*, but would indicate nothing as to the *mode of existence*. Considered in its most abstract form, it would give nothing more than *thinking being*. There is frequently a metaphysical fallacy admitted into this very early position; it is admitted or assumed that *thought* may be conceived of without being. I do not mean without *material being*, but without *being at all*, even immaterial being; and from this follows the objection, that *thought* does not prove *being*. I answer, Try to imagine *thought without a thinker*—*thought* detached from all being, and in an illimitable void in which no being, not even spirit, exists. We cannot; for if we try, we find ourselves conceiving of thought as some invisible essence floating in the otherwise universal vacuum, and therefore *actual being* even there, and rendering its own position not absolute vacuity. Thought, then, asserts *thinking existence*; and this is primary and abstract consciousness.

But this primary self-consciousness is essentially *activity*. From its position it can move in either of two directions, or manifest or exert its activity in either of two directions. It can employ its activity in inquiring into its own existence—into its own forms of thought. It must do so, according to its potency as a thinker; and in doing so, it inevitably inquires into the nature and reason of its own existence: it asks whence

and how that existence originated. It does not imagine itself the earliest of beings—the primal existence; and therefore it is anxious to inquire what was *before it*. Thus it plunges necessarily into the very essence of *à priori* thinking,—of thinking back, and asking what was *before* its own conscious existence,—what are the *laws* of thought which constituted the *forms* of thought. This necessary *à priori* thinking we have been already engaged in attempting briefly to explore, for the important purpose of ascertaining its intrinsic value, and the value of its results.

The other region of thought, not less open to man, and much more open to many men, is that which arises from his *sentient* nature in contact with external nature, and calling into action the power of reflex thought. This conjoint sensation and reflection he calls *perception*, or, as some do, *perception-of-matter*, using a compound term to imply the conjunction of sensation and reflection, forming an irresistible conviction, that what is thus brought before his intelligent nature is the reality of existence external to himself. Having thus attained the belief that external things affecting his organs of sensation have given rise to these perceptions, and thus given him the knowledge of an external world with which he exists in contact, meeting him at every point and pore of his sentient being, calling into action every capacity of his percipient being, and arousing every faculty of his intellectual being, he arranges all the knowledge thus acquired, and with it fills all the *forms of thought* of which he had previously become conscious. The question then arises, Is this external world merely a production of my own forms of thought, with which it so wonderfully agrees? Or has it an actual existence of its own, in no respect dependent on me, though marvellously adapted to my sentient, percipient, and intelligent nature? A very little reflection will suffice to convince every candid mind that it is not in any way dependent on himself, since he cannot prevent its existence making itself known to him often in conditions anything but agreeable, yet which he cannot annihilate when he pleases. It has, then, an existence of its own, quite independent of him, yet wonderfully qualified to fill all his forms of thought with correspondent realities. To what does it owe *its existence*? This is the inevitable inquiry. And what information can it suggest to me regarding the author of its exist-

ence? The question thus raised takes necessarily a different direction from that in which the inquirer was formerly engaged. He was then engaged among the laws of thought, in search of a solution of the problem of necessary being. He is now about to endeavour, by investigating existing nature, to ascertain the character of *its Author*, at once and intuitively held to be that Infinite Being in whose necessary existence he already believes. This new mode of inquiry is termed the *à posteriori* argument; and its course and purpose is, "From nature, or the universe, viewed as *effect*, to reason back to the Author of the universe regarded as *CAUSE*."

It will easily be perceived, both that to many men the *à posteriori* argument will be more attractive and intelligible than the *à priori* can be, and also why this is and must be the case. There is no small amount of both the faculty of abstract thinking, and practice in the use of that faculty, required in order to form an adequate conception of the *à priori* argument. But the *à posteriori* method can be followed and understood by almost any man, without more recondite thinking than is required for the ordinary affairs of life. Many will feel a strong repugnance to task their minds with such arduous exercise of thought, but will attend with pleasure and advantage to information brought to them from the fields of external nature. Yet these two forms of argument ought not to be viewed in any other light than as equally valuable. One may be more available to one class of men, the other to another. The one is not therefore more valuable than the other in itself, but more suitable in its application to a peculiar mental condition. We do not therefore admit that the *à posteriori* argument is intrinsically better than that by the *à priori* method; but we readily admit that it may be understood by a greater number, and may relatively be of greater general advantage to the majority of inquirers. By the method which we have adopted, and are pursuing, we avail ourselves of both. Those who have adequately understood the *à priori* course of thought and argument, will enter upon the new line of investigation, both with minds already furnished with *forms of thought* into which to receive the information now to be acquired, and also with minds trained to high and arduous inquiry. This may be a little further illustrated.

In his first and introductory book, Dr. Chalmers dwells

pretty largely on what he denominates "the ethics of theology, as distinct from the objects of theology." This disquisition is very valuable, chiefly as pointing out how the feeling of responsibility may be so forcibly aroused and directed, by means of the moral convictions and duties already existing in the human mind, as to lay on us an imperative obligation to direct our attention to the objects of theology. It shows, too, that the fact of the distant and recondite nature of the inquiry relative to the objects, does not in the least affect the obligation, or the ethics. Now this disquisition answers somewhat to our discussion of the *à priori* argument, in its enforcement of the duty to study the subject. But there is this advantage, as we think, in our method, that we not only have had the duty very strongly enforced by the very nature of the argument, but have also advanced far into the study itself. We have obtained not only the conviction of our duty to enter into a certain course of thought and investigation; but we have already obtained the power of thought, the apparatus of thinking, and some very important results of our prior inquiries, as a permanent acquisition of those inquiries, and a preparation for all that may yet be before us. We are quite as strongly attracted to the *à posteriori* argument as any *à posteriori* reasoner can be; but we do not come to that field of investigation to find there our first intimations of the Divine Being,—we come to seek further information relative to the attributes and character of that GOD in the reality of whose existence we already believe.

Still further and higher does the value of our previous acquisition reach. By our self-consciousness we obtain the idea of *personality*,—that is, of *moral will and consciousness*. By *à priori* thinking we legitimately carry the idea of personality into the idea of GOD, and conclude that man—moral and conscious man—must stand in some personal relation to a moral, intelligent, personal God. This even awfully solemn and sacred idea we carry with us, as an ascertained certainty, into all our investigations of the realm of nature. Man already knows his own relation to God, so far, in the universe of *mind*; and he now seeks to know his relation to the universe of *material being*, with the further important inquiry, how both *he* and *nature* stand in relation to God. The unreasoned but also undisputed thought with which the mind usually com-

mences its inquiries in the region of nature is, "God *is*, and is *everywhere*. He made me, and He made also the world. I cannot see Him; but I can see everywhere in nature the manifestations of His power and wisdom. In every phenomenon of nature I perceive some attribute of God; and from the character of these phenomena, I may infer to some extent the character of the attributes, and hence the character, of the Divine Being." Entering on his inquiry, he may find in every portion of his knowledge of nature the inevitable concurrence of two elements,—the *objective* element, or *fact*, and the *subjective* element, or *reasoning*, as existing in himself,—with a wonderful harmony between them. He may therefore conclude that the same God who made *nature*, made also his *reason*; and thus he may regard himself as, what we have already termed him, the synthesis of mind and matter, created both to know and to manifest God. But he may also miss his way to this true and happy conclusion, as every sceptic and every materialist does. For as he began with the unreasoned though undisputed postulate, "God *is*," and as that *may* be disputed, and however reasonable cannot be proved by *à posteriori* argument alone, he may find it impossible to advance beyond such generalities as, the laws of nature—antecedence and sequence—invariable antecedence and sequence—invariable laws—*fatalism*. But if he has acquired and understood what the *à priori* argument can legitimately teach,—his own personality in moral will and consciousness, and the intelligent and moral personality of God,—he cannot fall into the fathomless abyss of fatalism, and may learn much in the *à posteriori* region relative to the attributes and character of God.

There is another topic to which we wish to direct special attention. When we use the term Nature, we are liable to apply it only and exclusively to the external world—the material universe around us. But this is both an arbitrary and an undue limitation of the term. In the term *Nature* we are fully entitled to include *man himself*. Man is as truly an *object* in nature as any naturally and materially existent object of observation can possibly be. Every one deems it quite legitimate to direct attention to the *bee*, for example, and to its exquisite workmanship and wonderful instinct,—its habits of *consociation*, and its social economy and government. But is it not as perfectly legitimate to direct attention to *man*,—to his

productions in art, science, and literature,—to his marvellous mental faculties and powers,—to his social habits,—and to the whole structure and economy of human society, laws, and government? By doing so, we shall find that the sphere of the *à posteriori* argument has become almost boundless, has acquired an intensely increased degree of interest for us, and is fraught with instruction full of the most vital importance. Into this region Dr. Chalmers boldly entered, and from it drew not a little of his most valuable contributions to Natural Theology. Other authors have done the same, though with immeasurably less skill and power. It may, however, be questioned, not whether this can be legitimately done,—for that we hold to be unquestionable,—but whether it can legitimately yield to Natural Theology, with ample certainty, the advantages which Dr. Chalmers and others drew from it to that science, unless it has been first impregnated with *à priori* thinking and its results.

For example, there are no works in modern times, no works in any age, which contain and present so complete a digest of all human science, its laws, its reasonings, its necessary formal arrangement, and its results, as the writings of Auguste Comte; and yet the conclusion at which he arrives is not a valuable contribution to Natural Theology, but to what he terms Positive Philosophy, or Positivism; in short, absolute Atheism. Yet, in perusing the writings of Comte, it is impossible to refrain from admiring the amount of knowledge which he displays of almost every subject to which the human mind has ever addressed itself, and very specially the deep acquaintance which he manifests with human society in all its laws and all its phases—at least as it exists in France—and even with regard to its religious aspects. For he not only takes cognizance of religion as a necessary element in the human mind, and a power in society, but also traces, as he thinks, its origin, its successive developments, marks its present condition, and states what must be its final results. It is plain, therefore, that the introduction of the study of man and society into the *à posteriori* argument, however valuable it may be in the hands of some, will not necessarily render it more pregnant with proofs of the being and attributes of God, but may render it liable to be used in support of Atheism. At a subsequent stage I shall attempt a statement and refutation of the Positivism of Comte; meantime I can but

state, that to me it seems that the total absence of true *à priori* thinking, and the consequent want of the results thereby produced, will sufficiently account for the fatal result of scientific and human philosophy in the hands of Comte, and, with deep regret we add, of his few followers in Britain—regret the most profound that in Britain he could have even one follower. But if the human mind begin its inquiries without any desire to find a God, all its researches may but intensify its wilful blindness.

While we claim the right of carrying with us, and introducing into the domains of *à posteriori* investigation, the powers and principles of thought already acquired and trained in the *à priori* region, there is also another law of thought not necessarily obtained alone in the *à priori* region, yet closely related to it, which we must mention and explain before we proceed to employ it. We can scarcely even begin our observation of nature without perceiving *change* in the objects that come under our observation. The first effect of this might only be to surprise us. But when we perceive that, although changes are incessant, they follow each other in accordance with some uniform order or plan, so that when one kind of change is perceived we learn to expect it to be followed certainly by another of a corresponding kind, somehow correlated to it,—this gives rise to what is called our *belief in the uniformity of nature*. A great deal of metaphysical and unmetaphysical argumentation has been very unprofitably expended on this subject. Some explain our belief in the uniformity of nature, by asserting that we do so in consequence of an original law of the mind causing us instinctively to believe in the uniformity of nature. Others assert it to be the mere result of experience, and of course deny that our belief is entitled to go beyond our experience. Every one must feel that the latter cannot be the right explanation, because every one knows that his belief in the constant uniformity of nature's sequences far transcends his own experience.

Further, every one feels that he brings to his investigation of the question, or to his observation of facts, an antecedent expectation that these sequences will be uniform,—that there is a constancy in nature's operations,—and that he will seldom be disappointed by trusting in the constancy of nature. How has this antecedent expectation been formed? Is this one of the necessary forms of thought, without the use of which we cannot think orderly and rationally? Even if it were, how was it

called into action, so as to be the antecedent expectation that we always carry with us? This is no idle question, as we shall find ere long. Can our *à priori* thinking help us here? We have found that the primary element of our thinking is self-consciousness; and that this element is probably roused, and certainly kept in action, by the sensation of external resistance. To this external resistance we consciously offer a corresponding resistance, or employ it according to an internal and conscious act of *will*—a *volition*. Our own volition has just so much uniformity as the experienced resistance has, so far at least as the external resistance elicits only an internal consciousness of resisting. There may arise the volition to use the external something in the way in which it seems to act. But this *change* is in the internal volition, not in the external and physical resistance. Such is the very earliest intimation which we can have of nature; and it may induce us to form and entertain the notion of a uniform constancy in the external world long before we have learned to reason about nature, and sensation, and perception. If this be so, then we bring from the very dawn of consciousness, and from our earliest contact with nature, so much of a dim perception of the constancy of nature's position in regard to the conscious self, as to lead necessarily to the formation of a belief in the uniform constancy of nature. This seems to us a more probable explanation of this very important belief in the constancy of nature, existing and acting as an antecedent expectation, and leading us on in our investigations, than can otherwise be given. And when formed and in operation, it guides the experimental philosopher in all his inquiries, and is itself strengthened and confirmed by every successful experiment and new acquisition. It may afford also to the mental philosopher, and to the student of Natural Theology, the ground of a valuable inference in a very early stage of their inquiries,—the inference, namely, that there is an inherent harmony between man and nature, suggesting the great probability that the same God is the author of both man and nature. The value of this idea in the region of *à posteriori* argument cannot be over-estimated; and it rescues us at the very outset from the entangling sophistries of the sceptic.

We are here touching the border of the great vexed question respecting Cause and Effect; but previous to the discussion of this subject, we have already obtained so much acquaint-

ance with certain primary laws of thought, as to be prepared to enter upon it without much hazard of being led astray, or losing ourselves in misty obscurities. We bring to the investigation of the *à posteriori* argument nearly all the elements necessary for the successful prosecution of all its departments; and that, too, without the necessity of spending much time in preliminary disquisitions of a metaphysical character. So far as these may yet meet us, and force themselves upon our notice, we are provided with laws of thought by which they can be mastered. Our self-consciousness is beyond the reach of dispute. In that self-consciousness we have the elements of moral will, and that, too, *conscious moral will—a true personality*. We have also the certainty that God exists, and that He is an intelligent and moral being. We have a considerably well established belief, also, that our constitution, mental and physical, is in direct sympathetic and generally harmonious relation with the constitution of an actually existing external universe; and as we know that our being is derived from God, we infer that the universe with which we are in such sympathetic relation is also derived from God, and that from our study of nature we may expect to receive much precious information concerning the attributes and character of that God who appears to be the author of both man and nature.

Such is the state of mental preparation in which we proceed to the study of the *à posteriori* argument.

SEC. I. DOCTRINE OF CAUSATION.

The *à posteriori* argument, regarded as a problem, may be stated thus: "That the cause of nature and the cause of mind is one and the same." It is an endeavour to prove this, by reasoning from the minor term of the proposition back to the major—from the minor, or the *effect* of the universe, to the major, or the *Cause* of the universe; or from nature, or the universe, viewed as *effect*, to reason back to the Author of the universe, viewed as *cause*. It proceeds, therefore, throughout on the universal principle of *causation*. This principle is thus expressed in its axiomatic form, "Every change must have a cause;" and this implies a further explanatory statement, that "every cause must be of such a nature as to account for the character of the change." From

this arises the possibility of reasoning in either of two directions, thus: "From the character of the cause, we may infer the character of the change;" or, "From the character of the change, we may infer the character of the cause." The latter of these is the form of the *à posteriori* argument—the term *change* being understood as implying *effect*, under the law of causation. The full statement of the problem, then, is: "From the character of the effect to ascertain, so far as the effect extends, the character of the cause." It will be observed that we use the expression, so far as the effect extends, as cautiously guarding the proposition; because, while the *cause* must always be *as great* as the *effect*, it may be *indefinitely greater*; and we are not entitled to limit the cause to the exact boundaries of the effect, as is fallaciously attempted by the opponents of the *à posteriori* argument, when they assert that from a *finite effect* we can legitimately infer no more than a *finite cause*,—that from a *finite universe* we can infer no more than a *finite God*. We may admit that we cannot from a finite effect prove an infinite cause; but we are not legitimately required to deny infinity, especially if from previous or other proof we have reason to *admit infinity*. But this proof we have already received from the *à priori* argument, according to which it appeared, that from the fact of finite existence, given to us in self-consciousness, we are entitled, or rather constrained, to infer infinite existence. We have no need, therefore, to infer more from the *à posteriori* argument than its terms will warrant; but we are not, on that account, confined within a limited and defective conclusion.

The principle of causation, then, is this: Every *effect*, or thing which begins to be, must have a *cause*. And as, under this principle, every *change* must be regarded as an *effect*, we feel that we are in a universe of cause and effect. By our relation to the world, we perceive the universe of matter existing in space, and undergoing incessant changes. This is the aspect of *external nature*, and it suggests to us causation co-extensive with the universe. Internally, on the other hand, we are conscious of our own existence, and of *internal changes* of thought and emotion—of perception and of will. We long to know whether there be a *connecting link*, which might prove a common design between the external world and the internal world, or the self-conscious being that we term the *ME*. But

the sophist attempts to arrest us even in this early stage, by asserting that we cannot prove the reality of *causation*,—that we never do, or can, know anything about *cause*,—that we neither have, nor can obtain, any idea of *power*,—and that all that we can ever know relative to change, either in the external world or in the internal self, is the *sequence of changes*. He further tells us that these sequences are invariable, both in what we call *nature* and in what we call *thought*; that they cannot spring from or be connected with any *will*, because *will* is necessarily variable; and that therefore we ought to conclude that the universe of man and nature are alike governed by some invariable necessity—some inexorable destiny—and that all is *fatalism*.

We are not, however, left at the mercy of the sophist's assertions. We turn to the self-consciousness within, to inquire what information that bearer of sure evidence can give. It has already given some information of great importance. Its very first information made us at least partially acquainted both with the world without us, and with our own internal self. We had the sensation of some external resistance, and the consciousness of a volition either to overcome, or to use it. We perceived also that this volition, though entirely mental, had the power of producing muscular action in our sentient bodily frame, and thereby either overcoming the external resistance, or seizing on it, and employing its action in obedience to the *conscious will*. We thus obtain direct and immediate knowledge of one kind of causation; and we find that, so far from its being absolutely invariable, it varies in exact accordance with our own will. There is thus already formed so far within us, some idea of a sympathetic relation between mind and matter, partly by the ready obedience which our own material structure yields to the volitions of our own minds, and partly by the equally ready obedience which external nature yields to the power put forth by our bodily organization.¹

¹ When the sceptic uses the argument that "*will* is necessarily variable," we ought not at once to admit this assertion, but to try whether it be not a sophism. Do we find that *will* is so necessarily variable as he assumes? Do we not, on the contrary, find that the variableness of will depends upon other mental elements, and on mutable conditions? If the mind of any man be remarkable for wisdom and moral soundness of judgment, he will rarely see any reason to be variable in his *will*; for *will* is, or

We have now begun to reason as well as to observe; and as this combined *action* and *reason* has carried us out of the sceptic's first assertion, "that we cannot prove the reality of causation,"—inasmuch as we have *acted causation*, and know that we have done so,—we proceed into the region of external nature, to explore what may be learned in that wide sphere. Let it be observed, however, that in carrying our observed action and reason with us, we are now empowered to employ a very important mental faculty; we mean the faculty of framing analogies, and reasoning by *analogy*. This faculty is of more value, and is actually more employed, than many are aware. It lies in the heart of all inductive reasoning, and is largely employed by every man of inventive genius, by every discoverer in any department of art or science. It consists essentially in this, that our sensations and perceptions take notice of all resemblances, both in single incidents or facts, and in combined events or changes, with the latent idea that there is some more comprehensive truth from which they both take their form, and in which they are primarily united and inhere; and that, in perceiving these resemblances, we are led to conclude that the resemblance may go further than we have yet perceived, and may produce events or changes analogous to other already perceived events or changes. This mental idea of analogy will require generally to be verified by experiment; but it often suggests the experiment, and thereby aids largely

ought to be, the mental volition put forth in accordance with the comprehensive reason and wisdom which perceives what ought to be done, and under the direction of the moral faculty deciding what duty requires: therefore, to the extent that these are sound, must the *will* be almost invariable. Add to this the thought, that the condition of a wise and good man may be little, if at all, dependent on circumstances, so that he may be always free to act as reason and conscience dictate, and you will very readily see that in his case variableness is not a necessary attribute of his will. But carry this course of analysis to its ultimate point, and imagine the *will* of a being infinite in wisdom, power, goodness, and truth, and you will readily perceive, that so far from variableness being an essential characteristic of His will, it must necessarily be "without variableness or shadow of turning." The sophism, then, is of a very common and puny kind: "Some will is variable, therefore all will is variable." The will of some ignorant, fickle, dependent man is variable; therefore all will—not only that of a man of wise, upright, independent, and decided character, but also that of God—is variable. We need not surely further regard this sophism.

in extending our knowledge. It is also an ever-increasing power, both in the extent and rapidity with which it prompts to investigation, and in the confidence with which it enables us to apprehend results, and very often to anticipate them. All science is full of this mental power, and very greatly indebted to it; and in the case of some peculiarly gifted minds, it acts like a peculiar intuitional foresight. We may add, that it very readily lays hold of the idea of antecedent probability; and thus past experience and observed resemblance, combined in the reasoning from analogy, aid man very greatly in acquiring knowledge of the external world.

Let us employ this mental power a little, by way of example. When we think of causation at all closely, we feel ourselves inevitably impelled to regard it as capable of being viewed in two very different aspects. There is *physical causation*, and there is *moral causation*. The physical causation is analogous to moral causation, but cannot be identical with it, because physical causation cannot apply to mind, and moral causation cannot apply to matter, though they may illustrate each other. Let us give them, then, distinctive names, and let us call physical causation *force*, and moral causation *motive*. Mark now how this division and the analogy enable us to explore and apprehend nature. We begin with man, and with mind as we find it in man. By the aid of self-consciousness, we know that though man is sentient and percipient of *force*, he does not necessarily obey it, but resists or obeys according to the inward dictates of his own mind. You must reason with him, or he must reason with himself, before he *wills* to act, and then he acts or suffers as he *wills*; that is, a rational and moral *motive* must be applied to his rational and moral mind before he will act, and this is his true cause or *motive*.

But we look out on external nature, and on that department of it which we call animated nature—the sphere of sentient animal life. What is causation to that region of being? Not rational or moral causation, not *motive*, as that was cause to man, but something analogous to it—the application to its sentient life of some external *force*, which excites a low kind of volition or voluntary obedience to the force affecting its sentient life, and producing such pain or pleasure as is enough to elicit corresponding action. Further still we advance, carrying our analogy with us, and enter into the region of vegetable life.

But this insentient life yet possesses what is termed *irritability*, susceptible of receiving impulses from light, air, water, earth, which it can absorb into its own organization. The only causation which we can now employ is that of *force*—the invisible power which inorganic nature can exert on the irritability or susceptibility of root, fibre, and leaf;—all this we can so arrange and employ as to cultivate the vegetable world as we please. Still further our research, guided by analogy, or prompted by it and guided by experience, can extend. We can perceive that there resides some latent *force* in even inorganic nature, which not only acts on organic life, as we perceived in the vegetable world, but which can act on itself, and that too with wonderful uniformity. Of this, crystallization is a remarkable instance. Every distinct inorganic substance in nature has its own specific crystal, which it will uniformly assume in suitable circumstances. This latent *force* is its own. We can neither give it, nor take it away. But we can put the substance in such circumstances as will allow it to put forth that latent force and assume its crystalline form. We can also mark the specific operation of electric and magnetic forces; and we can so elicit and regulate them, as to render them subservient to our own use in several very wonderful ways. Nor do we suppose that we have yet ascertained all the *forces* or unknown elements of physical causation that exist in nature, or reached the limitation of their services to us in those that we already so far know. Very much of all these discoveries we owe to the almost intuitive faculty of reasoning from analogy; and this faculty originated in self-consciousness, and is related to *à priori* thinking.

I have made this brief digression, not to place a higher value on *à priori* thought, but to show how a complete answer may be given to the cavils of a cold and intellectual—yet not *very intellectual*—scepticism. For you will observe that in all these instances we have traced *causation* and found *power*,—a causation which we could understand, and a power which we could employ; not a fatalistic causation, but a causation which we could control, or neutralize, or vary, according to the dictates of our own reason and will;—a causation, therefore, which, in its very susceptibility of being so used by reason and will, showed its own derivation from the Supreme Reason and Will. We find physical cause, as designated *force*, either active or

latent in all material nature, and in every elementary substance; and in these most latent conditions we still find it not only existing, though invisibly and unknown essentially, but also existing often in the greatest potency. We might well imagine that, in its most *invisible condition*, yet *greatest potency*, it must be most subservient to mind when that mind possesses adequate knowledge and power; and thus we might believe the God of nature to be most absolutely present among the invisible forces of nature, with them wielding the universe. "He maketh the winds His messengers, and flaming fire His servant." We find *force* stimulating and promoting the growth of insentient vegetable life; and we can guide and use it. We still find force, but now in a higher form, giving impulse to the sentient life of animals, and assuming somewhat of the aspect of motive, yet not involving reason; and by employing it as our reason directs, we can both impel and govern the animal world. We can perceive that, in every rational human being, there is an internal constitution similar to that of which self-consciousness renders us cognizant; and we can therefore know, that although in percipient rational life physical force can affect the sensational frame, it cannot with any certain or constant uniformity determine the conduct of the man; and that if we wish to exercise any guiding influence on his conduct, we must appeal to his reason,—we must use the only causation which can have power with him,—we must produce a *motive*. Even then we shall find that the motive sways him only when his own will adopts it, and not further or otherwise than it does so. Beyond this point we cannot at present legitimately proceed; but we may indicate that there is yet a higher power that may be applied to man,—a purer and mightier causation: the power and causation of motives not merely rational and moral in the highest degree, but spiritual and divine, when the Holy Spirit brings the gospel to bear on his spiritually quickened and enlightened soul.

We have been traversing the realm of science, although without making any special reference to it as science. But now we mean to use it in illustration of our argument. What, then, is science? Science is direct and spontaneous knowledge, systematically arranged. The human mind, when beginning to observe, and think, and know, has as yet no science. But it has what can and will produce science; for it has first the

direct power of observing facts, and retaining the conceptions of them in its memory; and it has next the spontaneous laws of thought, by which it can classify and arrange them in accordance with its own systematizing tendency. The knowledge thus obtained, classified and systematically arranged, is entitled science. There may be long and extensive observation, commonly called induction,—much use of analogical reasoning,—many an attempted classification,—before it can become true science. And even when true, it may probably never become complete; for there may be continually coming into observation new facts that require to be added. But when it has been established so as to unite both the laws of thought, according to which men classify, and the observed coincident relations of facts, in accordance with which they require to be classified and arranged, then there is a true and exact science. And when it has been thus accurately elaborated, it is the same to all men by whom it is understood. There are sciences of different kinds, because there are different objects in nature; but all sciences contain the laws of human thought on the one hand, and the classified and arranged objects of nature on the other. By means of sense we perceive, by means of reason we arrange, all the phenomena of nature; *and the one link uniting the sense and reason of man to the phenomena of nature is Science.*¹

This might be reasoned out and illustrated to any length; but we forbear, believing that it will be readily understood and admitted. We are, however, anxious to draw attention to the position in which we now stand. We have achieved science; and science is the union between man and nature—

¹ The application of this idea is shown in the happiest and most convincing manner in the first lecture of *The Testimony of the Rocks*, in which it is shown that man classifies all his knowledge, in consequence of his mind possessing a native tendency to classify, or a native principle of classification. But while this principle, implanted in him by his Creator, impels him to classify, he finds, as he advances in his pleasing task, that there already runs through all nature an aptness to be classified in certain all-pervading principles and analogies, which concur in combining all things under certain great leading principles, relations, and resemblances,—intimating very clearly that the Creator Himself made all His works in accordance with principles of classification,—that in this respect nature itself proves that the mind of man is an image of the mind of God, and that as man is conscious of design, he cannot but see design in creation, proving it to be the work of an Infinitely Wise Designing Mind—of God.

between the subjective and the objective worlds. It unites the intuitions of reason with the perceived phenomena of nature. It contains portions of both elements, and thereby unites them. If there were not a universal harmony between man and nature, there could not be science. But there is science; therefore there is a universal harmony between them. The objective universe of nature, and the subjective universe of mind, are in reality only the separate elements of one and the same universe: consequently, if we find the cause of the one, we find the cause of the other,—the cause of external nature must be the cause of the moral world within us. This is the conclusion we are already entitled to form,—a conclusion very different from that to which sophistry tried to mislead us.

We are no doubt greatly indebted to science for aiding us in reaching this conclusion by so direct and clear a path. We may, however, add that men of science themselves frequently miss this conclusion—not only in such instances as that of Comte, but in the case of many others from whom better things might have been expected. It may be worth while to specify what we apprehend to be the reason of their aberration. Some time since it was regarded as an indubitable philosophical truth, that nothing more was to be found in nature but antecedents and sequences, following each other with sufficient uniformity to furnish ground for science, but never yielding direct evidence of a real cause. The word nevertheless was very convenient, and they used it, but generally with a warning to their readers that it was to be understood as meaning nothing more than invariable sequence, because real cause was not known in nature, and could not be known. They could not therefore find any real *cause* in nature, for they did not expect to find it—nay, denied that it could be found. It was not possible, from such a defective premiss, to arrive at an adequate conclusion. But they *did* use a term which implied all that they denied, though they did not fully define that term: they used the term *force* to indicate that unseen and unknown, but real power, which was found to pervade all nature, and to produce all its perceptible changes. They estimated its power; they calculated the amount of that power; they marked the laws of its operations; they calculated with it; they used it as an absolute reality, and yet they would not admit it to be a true physical cause. Were they afraid that,

if they admitted a cause in nature, they would not be able to deny a great First Cause—supernatural, supreme, divine? If this was not their secret reason,—and we will not assert that it was,—their conduct and reasoning were irrationally unscientific, and had the miserable effect of leaving them in the grasp of infidelity and fatalism—of that blind *force* which was to them the unconscious God of their unconscious universe—the strong inexorable destiny of unreasoning power, perhaps a material Pantheism, or an unintelligible Idealism.

There has, however, of late a great and propitious change taken place among our men of highest science. Few of them would seek now to conceal the indications of nature that all is full of *cause*, and lead the thoughtful observer of nature up to the *Cause of causes*—to *God*. Many of them delight to make their profound knowledge of science, and science itself, instrumental in illustrating the divine attributes—the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God, as manifested in the universe. From all such right-minded scientific men we would confidently anticipate the ready admission, that the use which we have made of science in our argument is a correct and true one, and that they delight to trace, in their own manner, the clear and daily multiplying proofs that He who created the mind of man, and sent him forth to study and interpret nature, is also the Creator of the universe in which man has been placed, that he might lend it his reason and his voice, and fill it with the anthem of intelligent praise. Many eloquent passages precisely to this effect might be quoted from the writings of Sir John Herschell, Professor Whewell, Professor Sedgwick, Sir David Brewster, and other men pre-eminent in science, to whose able and learned works we gladly refer. But above them all in directness of purpose, in deep searching investigation, in vividness of description, and in magnificent splendour of expression, would we place the various geological works of the late Hugh Miller, particularly in his latest work, *The Testimony of the Rocks*, in which, despite the small detailed criticisms of some small critics, we find what we venture to term the noblest and best contribution to Natural Theology, in the argument from design, that has ever been produced.

SEC. II. DOCTRINE OF ADAPTATION—DESIGN.

The most common mode of stating and prosecuting the *à posteriori* argument is by means of what is termed *design*. By the word *design* is meant, in its most simple sense, *the adaptation of means to the accomplishment of some end*. This, of course, assumes that there is some end in view which is sought to be obtained, and that the means likely to accomplish that end are chosen and employed. This, again, implies *mind* exercising *thought* and *reason*, with the deliberate intention and the forecasting plan of employing means such as may produce the desired result. It implies, further, the idea of power, and the use of that power by the thinking and forecasting mind. All this is contained in a full conception of what is meant by the term *design*. Mind using matter for the accomplishment of its own intentions, is what we mean when we speak of the operations of *designing mind*.

The course commonly adopted by writers on the *à posteriori* argument, is to contemplate nature as *purely objective*, and from the observed arrangements to draw such inferences as may seem valid under the ordinary laws of causation. According to that method, we do not commence with the conception of mind, and judge of its wisdom by our perception of the skill with which the means have been chosen and applied; but we mark the existing arrangements, and endeavour to discover whether they are manifestly such as infer adaptation to an end—and therefore infer that such an end was in view, and led to that arranged adaptation—and that therefore there must be mind designing, that is, with an end in contemplation, and adapting suitable means for its accomplishment. This is the simplest and most common conception of the *à posteriori* argument. This is the method which has been adopted and employed by Paley with consummate ability and skill, so far as clear statement and convincing argument are concerned.

In order that the real and absolute value of the *à posteriori* argument may be fairly tested, it must in the first instance be restricted rigidly to the sphere of external nature,—the *objective world*; and all considerations drawn from the mental constitution of man must be carefully excluded. We do not mean to say that, in an earnest attempt to learn what we can from nature regarding the attributes and character of its

Author, for the satisfaction of our own minds, we are not at liberty to make use of every element within our reach,—as men generally do ; but we mean to say, that in order scientifically to construct and produce an argument intended to convince possible gainsayers, we must keep strictly within the proper limits of that argument. How much, then, can nature actually teach us, under the ordinary laws of causation, even limiting the idea of physical causation to the notion of *force*, and excluding reflective thought drawn from self? This is our present question.

By the very slightest observation of nature, we are constrained to admit the adaptation of means to an end,—even the arrangement and use of *forces* to produce some result by their means. But when we thus rigidly keep within the region of nature alone, we are at once met by the specious objections of the sophist. “I grant,” he may say, “that all things are in conditions suitable to their nature; for otherwise they could not exist, or at least could not perform their functions; but while this manifests *existing suitableness*, it does not necessarily prove *designed adaptation*. There may be in nature some plastic power of prodigiously varied capacity for the production of form and function. That power might have gone on producing fishes, for example, on land, where they could not perform their functions, and therefore could not exist, and are not found existing. But when it produced them in the sea, although without any more design than before, they would then be in condition to perform their functions, and to exist. Their actual existence can thus be accounted for without inferring design; and therefore I deny that their existence can prove design.” This is no caricature: it is a fair specimen of the reasonings of the school of the Positive Philosophy. But it is adequately met and refuted, when we take into consideration such complex facts as *serial* existences,—organisms which require numerous inter-related and co-related adaptations, not one of which could exist and perform its functions without the co-existent presence of all the others, and not one of which has the power to produce any other; or, the correlated groups of vegetables, combining to form classification and order, based upon their mutual relations, but none having the power to impart that common relation, and so form the ground-element of the group; or, the absolute and permanent mathematical

ratios which are found to exist in many departments of nature, regulating their constitution and action when so arranged, but which arrangement has no power to produce itself. All these observed facts in nature prove that there is more than the mere performance of a function,—that there is a long, elaborate, complex, and well-arranged preparation for the performance itself, without which it would not be possible; and this is ample and irresistible proof that there is in nature the adaptation of means to a designed end. We hold, therefore, that the argument is conclusive to that extent, and we set aside unhesitatingly the objection of the founder of Positivism.

A different kind of objection is stated by those who seem too much afraid of what they term “the doctrine of final causes” as very liable to encourage men to frame hasty conjectures, instead of following the more laborious path of strict science. The “doctrine of final causes,” rightly understood, is precisely the argument from *design*. The term “final cause” means that there is some *final* object in view, the attainment of which has *caused* the adoption and employment of certain means for that purpose: it is termed *final*, because it is the end ultimately in view; and it is termed a *cause*, on account of the impulse which it gives to the mind, leading it to frame and employ means for its attainment. It is employed also in contradistinction to the term *efficient cause*, or that active power or immediate agency by the operation of which the result is directly produced. An efficient cause is true and direct causation; but a final cause is the end in view, or design, inducing the mind to choose, and also to employ, means adapted to that end. Now, in the process of investigating nature, and tracing the adaptation of means to an end, it is very possible that men of ardent and hasty minds may leap to a rash conclusion, assume *an* end before it has been proved to be manifestly *the* end, and may misinterpret nature in order to get something like proof of their own foregone conclusion. Something like this was the custom generally of ancient philosophy. These ancient philosophers were much in the habit of thinking out a system of nature,—imagining a series of ends in view which nature had to accomplish,—and then attempting to obtain from nature proofs or indications that these were the very ends for the accomplishment of which nature was so constituted. It is obvious enough that this was

not to interpret nature, but to force an interpretation upon nature; and that it might produce plenty of conjecture, but could not give rise to science. So far as the danger of such a process may be supposed still to exist, it is all right and well to warn against it. But it would be an enormous abuse of such a caution, to employ it against the legitimate use of tracing out the proof of design, and thereby proving that mind governs nature. Bacon expressed himself disparagingly regarding the "doctrine of final causes." But he had to contend against the misuse of that doctrine by the schoolmen of the middle ages; and thus understood and applied, his disparaging language is neither too strong nor ill-directed. We are not, however, to regard this as intended to cast discredit on the process by which we may cautiously and correctly trace design in nature's adaptations.

The very same argument with which Paley begins his celebrated treatise, may be used with regard to any of what are called the productions of nature, from a leaf to a forest, from a drop of water to the ocean, from a ray of light to the starry heavens, from an insect to a man of the loftiest genius, a Milton or a Newton. The illustration may be illimitable, but the argument is one and the same. The direct conclusion must always be, that the Author of all this is a mind—an intelligent, designing mind—a mind possessing *formative design*, and *forming power* adequate to its accomplishment.

It may be added, however, that though the argument, as Paley left it, is as complete and conclusive as it can be, considered *as* argument; yet the progress of science is continually adding to its sphere of application, and modifying some of its statements. For example, the finding of a stone on the heath would not now admit of such a summary dismissal with a careless evasion of any answer, as it would have done in the time of Paley. It might be picked up, examined closely, and seen to be a specimen of some very remarkable geological formation. In the hands of a Hugh Miller it might be made to tell of a former world—of its strangely scaled and armed inhabitants—of its vast and finely-constructed flora—of the manifold proofs of design in the complicated structure of plant or animal therein embedded, and preserved in the dark period of time long gone by, as if for the very purpose of instructing future man, and teaching him that the God in whom he himself lived, and

moved, and had his being, is the same "Ancient of days" who framed and ruled the earlier world on whose relics he is gazing. This, however, would not be any real alteration of the argument, far less any invalidation of it; but it would be a new application of it, furnished by advancing science for its confirmation.

To resume and prosecute the argument itself, the inquiry now rises: Nature indeed throughout is manifestly constructed on a principle that shows adaptation of means to an end; but what does this prove? When considered objectively, and without any reference to our own self-consciousness and its intuitions, does it prove the existence of God? The adaptation of means to an end certainly proves *mind*, by proving *design*. But as the existence of a watch proves only skill and power in the maker of it, out of previously existing materials, yet cannot prove that he could have made the materials themselves; so the adaptations in nature may prove amply the existence of mind with skill and power enough to produce these adaptations, but does not at least necessarily prove that this mind also gave existence to the material employed in the construction of nature. For anything that this argument has yet proved, or perhaps can prove, matter may have existed eternally, incapable of becoming a world of order and life by means of anything in itself, but capable of being arranged into a world by a mind possessing adequate intelligence and power. The existence of matter cannot, we apprehend, be proved either to have been eternal or not eternal; for there does not seem to be any element for the proof of either within our reach. But when we contemplate matter as it exists in the forms and adaptations of nature, each of these forms and adaptations can be proved to have had a beginning caused by a design. This may be proved most easily by attending to the region of life, where each living organism comes into being by *reproduction*, that is, by derivation from a parent, also a living organism, and never merely from inorganic matter, showing the necessary existence of a power greater than nature—a creative Parent. It might be proved also by arguments drawn from the science of astronomy; for it may be shown that the forces which, by their steady co-operation, keep the planetary bodies in their orbits, could not possibly have placed them in the positions where these forces produce at once motion and equipoise.

From the study of nature, then, by the *à posteriori* argument alone, applied solely to the objective universe, we obtain with clear certainty the conclusion that there is a *great First Cause*, distinct from nature, and the cause of nature's arrangements; and that the first attribute of this cause is *power*—absolute power over the physical creation.

At this point we find ourselves again in contact and collision with one of the kinds of scepticism. When we confine our attention solely to the objective physical world, we find power, both *efficient* and *constructive*: we find power adequate to employ such force as is sufficient to originate all the motions of all the universe, and this is efficient causation; and we find also power of such a character as to originate all arrangement—*designing* and *formative power*. If we regard man's physical structure merely as physical structure, we find the same argument further illustrated, but nothing more. And as long as we exclude man's mental and moral constitution, we cannot find more. Now this is precisely what the sceptical reasoner does. He rigidly excludes the human mind, its moral constitution, and the constitution of human society, from his consideration, and then he frames his conclusion from what objective nature alone has furnished. Objective nature has furnished the perception of power, and that, too, of designing power, adapting means to an end. But it has not furnished the concept of *moral power*, so long as man's inner nature is excluded from the consideration. The concept of mere designing power gives rise very readily to the complex concept, "laws of nature," by which an intelligible name is given to the manifold indications of design that have been observed. These "laws of nature" do well enough for physical science to reason from, or reason with; but they seem to enable the man of physical science to rest satisfied without rising to the idea of any higher power. Not only so, but, as we have already seen, he may employ them sophistically to neutralize or annihilate the idea of causation. "Laws of nature there unquestionably are," he says, "for we can trace their uniform operation; but *cause* we cannot find." Yet what *is* a law of nature in uniform operation, but a uniformly operating cause?¹

¹ The phrase "laws of nature" may seem to demand a few remarks. There are two different ways in which men are liable to misunderstand and misuse this very common expression. They may use it to convey the idea

The discussion with the sceptical man of science might take a somewhat different form. We might ask whether he regards these laws of nature as having each a distinct substantive existence of its own; or whether he regards them as somehow inherent in some one vast comprehensive law-power existing in nature. He will scarcely ascribe to each a substantive existence, lest he should glide into a multiplex mythology, full of innumerable deities. But he may try to give some such explanation of a great general law pervading all nature, and manifesting its existence and power in special forms of law; and as these special laws all operate with unchanging constancy, he must conclude that the general law is also unchangingly constant. That is, nature acts under the uniform influence of some vast but unintelligent power—a destiny—a fate—a material Pantheism.

He may, perhaps, turn boldly round and say, “What other conclusion can even *your* views of man and society yield? You assume a God, and you worship Him; but what does that that the laws of nature are the direct operations of God,—that there is no *power* in nature, and no causation, but the direct divine agency working always and everywhere, and uniformly in the same manner throughout the universe. This, which was the idea of Malebranche, has an aspect of great sublimity,—seems to ascribe all glory to God in everything, from the revolutions of suns and systems, to the attraction of atoms, and the twinkling of gnats in the sunshine,—and has imposed upon many. But it leads inevitably to a kind of grand-looking, idealistic Pantheism, and even then to an absolute Fatalism, if it adopt the notion of an impersonal God. On the other hand, if men give a *physical* meaning to the phrase, it must end in either a materialistic Pantheism or a material Fatalism, which is necessarily pure Atheism. But if men will earnestly analyze the phrase “laws of nature,” they may find two different conceptions appearing, each of great importance to a sincere inquirer. It may be possible to show, that when a merely physical meaning is given to the term law, it can imply nothing more than the ultimate fact to which an extensive induction may have led,—the aggregate designation given to that ultimate element in which all the subordinate elements of the wide induction seem to combine, as in their proper root. In this sense it is not a power at all, but an ultimate fact,—something like a mathematical axiom, with which or from which men may proceed to reason. Or if a metaphysical meaning be given to the term, it may be shown that in this sense all law resides in mind, must act in conformity with the nature of mind,—must be the expression of design in mind,—and may be the expression of an intelligent, conscious, moral, personal mind; and the operations which it directs may be as uniform as the will of that infinite mind, putting forth its agency in accordance with infinite wisdom and goodness.

avail you against the laws of nature? Does not one event happen equally to the righteous and the wicked—to the man who worships, and the man who worships not, when either of them violates these inexorable and unchanging laws? They are inevitable and unchanging; and they must be unintelligent and unconscious, otherwise they might be termed unjust, if not even malignant.”

This is perhaps the worst form that Scepticism, or Rationalism, or Secularism, or whatever name it bears, can take; and it derives all its plausibility from its exclusive reference to the objective material world. So long as it is allowed to keep itself strictly within that region, and so long as we allow it to do so by doing the same ourselves in our argument, it may be found very difficult to meet this objection. But we are not bound to do so. We have been using our reason all along, even in attending to the sceptic's argument; and he has been using his reason in producing it. But reason, human reason, his and ours, has its essence in self-consciousness, and has an absolute and indestructible right to employ all the laws of thought that self-consciousness can yield. Objective nature has proved to us the existence of a designing power. But our own consciousness was engaged in helping us out with that great inference—even in giving the form of thought, without which the inference could neither have been conceived nor have found expression. By the same consciousness, we know that design necessarily implies mind—conscious mind—intelligent mind—*mind intending, willing, acting*. We reject, therefore, the sceptic's conclusion, as inconsistent with our own consciousness—inconsistent with *his own* consciousness, if he will but attend to its intimations—inconsistent with human consciousness in its most comprehensive sense.

This answer we can confidently give to the reasoner of sceptical tendency, and can appeal to a power within his own being which he cannot dispute; or if he do dispute his own consciousness, our argument ends—we cease to have common ground for further discussion. But while we can silence the sceptic, we may feel that his argument has raised an uneasy feeling within us which we cannot so readily silence. We cannot deny that there are constantly occurring in human life, events of the most painfully perplexing kind. We see around us the good man in a state of calamity and affliction, and the

wicked man in a state of comfort and prosperity. We feel within us a moral power persuading us to what is righteous, and true, and just; but we do not readily and constantly comply with its dictates, and we are tortured by remorse, and haunted by the dread of punishment. We perceive that similar sentiments are entertained by our fellow-men, and similar conduct pursued. We perceive, moreover, that there are no such irregularities in the arrangements and operations of the physical world; that it is so constituted, that if we were always in accordance with what men term its laws, we might be always in the enjoyment of welfare and happiness. This latter consideration agrees with our conviction, that the *cause* of this world is not a cause only, but a *moral governor*; yet still we feel that our condition is one of inexplicable mystery, so far at least as we have yet learned from nature. But this very objection, and the nature of the topics which it suggests, constrain us to direct our attention to the human element of the inquiry; that is, into a consideration of the mental and moral nature of man, the constitution of society, and the addition which these considerations give to the *à posteriori* argument. This consideration both prompts and impels, nay, constrains us to have recourse to the region of man's moral nature; which, however, is both legitimately within our present province, and has a right to demand from us a full and attentive investigation.

CHAPTER V.

ARGUMENT FORMED BY COMBINATION OF *A PRIORI* AND *A POSTERIORI* METHODS.



WITHOUT entering into any lengthened or minute examination of the human mind, as is done in the study of Mental Philosophy, we may direct attention to some of its main aspects and general principles, so far as is necessary to introduce and apply the portion of our argument on which we are now about to enter.

It is a very important fact in our constitution, that in consequence of the addition to one class of human faculties of another of a higher order, even the lower class acquires both expansion and elevation, and becomes subject to laws not otherwise applicable to it. The merely intellectual or cognitive powers of the mind, for example, do not of themselves give rise to the sentiment or idea of *right* and *wrong* in any *moral sense*. But when we direct our attention to a higher class of human faculties, usually termed the *active powers of the mind*, we find them all pervaded by an element of a new character, which continually suggests the idea of rightness or wrongness, and gives rise to the sentiment of approbation or disapprobation, producing a result necessary to their beneficial existence and operation. All the active powers of the mind tend to bring man into contact with man; and that this contact may not be incessant hostility, there must be some means of making it concord. Hence it is apparent that we are entering another and a higher region, and have now to do with nobler elements. But if, before we explore this new region, we turn round and look back, and down, on any previous survey of the human mind that we have made, with regard to its sentient, percipient, and intellectual faculties, we shall find that, in consequence of the union of intellectual and active powers in the same being, even the intellectual faculties become subject to the laws that regulate the active powers, and can be regarded in this combined

aspect with feelings of approbation or disapprobation. The whole man is now lifted into a *moral* region, and must be viewed as a *moral* being.

But we can scarcely even begin to explore this moral region of our nature without perceiving, that while the Desires and Affections, to use the common terms (the *conative* in Sir W. Hamilton's language), prompt men to action, it is not to action unrestrained,—not to action irrespective of consequences to ourselves and others. Throughout their whole range they are characterized by the presence of something which leads us to regard their exercise as right or wrong in special circumstances, and to regulate it accordingly. This is peculiarly perceptible in the constant notion which we entertain respecting the propriety of their limitations. The unrestrained indulgence of any *appetite*, *desire*, or *affection* invariably calls forth the sentiment of disapprobation. This is not the case with regard to the merely intellectual or cognitive faculties. The only limitation which they sustain is that arising from their own weakness; and though this may cause regret, it would never give rise to the idea of demerit,—or rather, it excludes that sentiment. But the idea of a limitation, to pass which excites the sentiment of disapprobation, suggests of necessity the idea of a law fixing the limits which the indulgence of desires and affections ought not to pass. Limitation, thus viewed as fixed by law, necessarily implies the existence of a faculty having authority to determine these limits, and to regulate the entire exercise of the active powers. Hence arise the ideas of *duty*, *moral obligation*, and *responsibility*. To act in obedience to these ideas is *right*; to violate them is *wrong*. This, however, does not exhaust the idea or sentiment; for while we can consider *states of mind* in themselves, apart from the actions to which they prompt, we can also regard those states with approbation or disapprobation, viewed in their very nature and essence, and without taking into consideration the idea of limitation. Further, in the exercise of the moral faculty we are conscious of a pleasurable or painful emotion, as we approve or disapprove. Thus we arrive at the full conception of the moral faculty, and we now perceive that its nature is to decide respecting the rightness or wrongness, the merit or demerit, of every appetite, desire, and affection; that it has authority to determine the limits within which they shall be exercised, and

to regulate their whole course of order and action ; and that all its decisions are inherently accompanied or pervaded by the emotion of pleasure when it pronounces the sentence of approbation, or pain when it expresses disapprobation, both with regard to our own conduct and that of others. There is yet one preliminary remark which must be made : Although the moral faculty takes cognizance of all states of mind, and passes its decisions upon them all, and upon the actions to which they impel, regarding them with very different and ever varying degrees of approbation or the reverse, yet in its own operations it must always be felt as *one faculty*,—not the combination of many faculties, each acting in its turn, but One Faculty, having a province of its own, taking cognizance of everything which enters that province, and asserting a rightful supremacy within that peculiar province.

SEC. I. DIFFERENT THEORIES OF MORALS.

It may be expedient to direct our attention very briefly to some of the prevalent theories of morals which have been promulgated by philosophers ; keeping meanwhile in remembrance as distinctly as possible, that conception of the moral faculty at which we have arrived. The *moral faculty* we conceive to be, that one active power of the mind whose nature it is to take cognizance of the distinction between right and wrong, good and evil in all other states of mind, and in all actions prompted by these states ; whose decisions have a necessary and inherent authority, prescribing limits to, and regulating the actions of, all our *appetites*, *desires*, and *affections*, and giving rise to the moral sentiments of *duty*, *moral obligation*, and *responsibility* ; and in all whose actions there is inherent the pleasurable or painful emotions of approbation or disapprobation. Let it be carefully marked, that the moral faculty does not *create* the distinction between right and wrong, but merely *takes cognizance of it*, *discerns it*, and *declares it* ; and that therefore its decisions, however authoritative, do not and cannot form the ultimate standard of morality. That action, or mental state, may very confidently be said to be *right*, which the moral faculty approves ; or still more confidently may be said to be *wrong* to the individual himself, whose moral faculty disapproves ; but that action or mental state may be *wrong*,

which the moral faculty *does not condemn*. Any theory of morals, therefore, framed from the unaided decision of the moral faculty alone, may be both inaccurate and incomplete. Had this consideration been more clearly and constantly before the minds of moral philosophers, they might have avoided many errors; and indeed their whole speculations on ethical subjects must have borne a different aspect.

Various theories of morals, or statements of such leading principle or principles as might be respectively the foundation of a theory of ethics, have been propounded from time to time, the chief of which are the following :

1. That Virtue, or moral rectitude, consists in living *according to nature* (Stoic).
2. That what produces the *greatest amount of happiness* is Virtue (Epicurean).
3. That the *just medium between extremes* is Virtue (the Aristotelian).
4. The *Eternal Fitnesses of things*, or abstract ideal Truth (Cudworth and others).
5. *Utility*, Prudence, Expediency, wisely adjusted Compromise (Paley and others).
6. The *Moral Sense*, percipient of moral relations (Hutcheson and others).
7. *Right Reason, Judgment, Sympathy, Universal Benevolence* (Smith and others).
8. The *Love of Being*, elevated into the Love of God (Jonathan Edwards).
9. *Conscience* (Bishop Butler, Sir James Mackintosh, Dr. Chalmers, and others).

It is not my intention to investigate and analyze these various theories of morals at any length; but a few remarks on the most important of them, and on the principles from which they spring, may be beneficial. The three leading theories of antiquity—the *Stoic, Epicurean, and Aristotelian*—*accordance with nature, love of happiness, and the just medium*—are all defective. The axiom that virtue is *living in accordance with nature* has in it a portion of truth, for it recognises constitutional principles as in themselves right and authoritative; and every person must be aware that a life spent in

habitual violation of nature's dictates must be wrong in itself, and is productive of misery. But we need a definition of nature. Does it mean the constitution of each several man?—that is too varied. Or of mankind in general?—that is both too vague and too limited. Or of the universe, including the Deity, its Creator? To the knowledge of that we cannot attain. We must therefore abandon that theory. We turn, then, to the *love of happiness*. But here we are at once met by the difficulty of finding any general harmony in the opinions of mankind respecting happiness, wherein it consists. The opinions of men respecting happiness are as varied as are their tastes and habits. All men instinctively desire happiness; but their ideas of happiness are infinitely diversified, consequently this can furnish no sure standard of morals,—nay, it can furnish no criterion at all, nor any rule for the guidance of our conduct, since each man's taste and wishes would be his own peculiar rule. There may seem to be something more plausible in the theory which takes for its basis *the just medium between extremes*. But what are extremes? *That* may be the extreme to one man, which is the ordinary course of conduct to another; consequently there could be no correspondence and no medium between the views which such men would take. There is needed for such a theory some mode of estimating extremes, or rather, perhaps, some mode of fixing *a medium*,—the very thing assumed,—the distance from which is the estimate of extremes. That is, the theory has itself no basis, and therefore can never come into practical existence.

The more modern theories already enumerated may be considerably reduced by being grouped together, and their examination thereby simplified. The theory which would make moral rectitude to consist in the *Eternal Fitness of things*, has for its origin the *Platonic theory*, that all creation was framed in conformity with *ideas pre-existent in the Divine Mind*. Among these archetypal ideas there necessarily existed a harmonious congruity, absolutely perfect. The perfection of creation would therefore consist in its embodiment of these ideas, and in the relations of existent or created things, corresponding to each other as completely as did the relations of the archetypal ideas in the Divine Mind. There is something exceedingly grand, even sublime, in this theory, and it has to some extent modified almost every modern system of morals.

It forms the basis of the systems of Cudworth, Clarke, and Price. It underlies and pervades the whole of the German theories, from Leibnitz to Kant. Its influence is perceptible in the systems of Malebranche, Butler, Paley, Hutcheson, Smith, and even of Jonathan Edwards. But it lies open to one insurmountable objection—it cannot be so apprehended by man as to furnish him with a *rule of duty*. Let it be granted that there were in the Divine Mind from all eternity archetypal ideas, in accordance with which He framed the universe; and let it be said that right and wrong implies the agreement or disagreement between the created universe and these ideas, or even between the relations of those created things which compose the universe;—still it will be impossible for any mind but that of the Deity Himself to have a full and complete perception of all these relations and their agreement: consequently the *eternal fitnesses of things, and abstract yet universal and immutable truth*, can be the standard of moral rectitude to no being but the Creator. It might be added, that a misconception of this great theory, and misuse of it, lies at the root of idealistic Pantheism.

Another class of moral systems places the standard of morality in what is variously termed *The Good—The Summum Bonum—Good upon the whole—The Beneficial—The Useful, or Expedient*. There is considerable plausibility and some truth in these theories, which are all pervaded by that master element which professes to have the production of good and happiness for its object. But they, too, require an extent of knowledge of which a finite mind is not capable. There is nothing of which we obtain greater certainty by almost daily experience, than the fact that what at any given *present time* we regarded as *good*, we may soon have reason to regret, or even to condemn as *evil*. At no time are we able with certainty to say that a wider range of knowledge or a more prolonged view of future consequences may not change entirely our estimate of what, with our present knowledge, we consider good. What is right will always prove ultimately expedient; but that may seem expedient which is not right, and will ultimately prove injurious. Further, let it be observed, that both the theories which assume for their basis the *eternal fitnesses of things*, and those that assume *the good and the useful*, are, after all, conceptions of the *intellect*, rather than of the *moral faculties*

of the mind. Not only are they necessarily liable to error, as has been shown; but even though their certainty were far greater than it is or can be, they would not produce the distinctive characteristics of morality. An error in knowledge, or even an error in judgment, may call forth in a man's mind the feeling of regret that he did not know more, or judge more correctly; but it would not necessarily cause the painful emotion of self-condemnation, which forms the characteristic element in the consciousness of moral delinquency. From none of these theories, therefore, nor from the general principles which pervade them all, can we derive the full idea of duty—of right and wrong—of responsibility. A careful perusal of the various works in which those theories are stated and advocated, might be instructive with regard to moral perceptions and moral sentiments, but could never enable us to frame a complete and satisfactory standard of morality.

There is another class of moral theories which, in our opinion, approach much nearer the truth—such as *the moral sense, sympathy, universal benevolence, the love of being*. The most direct notion that we can form of the term *moral sense* is, that there is a faculty in the mind which has for its proper function the perception of morality. The word *sense* must be understood to be derived from the analogy of the bodily senses, and to mean a faculty of a distinct and separate nature implanted in the mind, and thereby enabling us to perceive morality. Thus understood, the term conveys important truth; but it is necessary to guard against the perverse interpretation which the ideal theory gives to this term, and by which the primary meaning of the word *sense*, as implying a bodily capacity, is attempted to be fixed on the term *moral sense*. There is another remark which must be made with regard to this term. It does not very directly suggest the idea, that the operations of the moral sense must be both emotional and authoritative; yet, fairly understood, it implies, or at least it does not contradict, that idea. For if it be admitted to be an original faculty of the mind, then all its operations must be authoritative, and all its evidences and judgments intuitive, since, being original, its existence and operations cannot admit of any other proof than that of conscious existence; and since its very nature is emotional, the existence of its proper emotions is their own and their only evidence. When we thus understand the moral

sense, or, as we prefer to term it, the moral faculty, we are prepared to see in what manner *sympathy*, though not itself the moral faculty, is well fitted to act as its ready handmaid. For the office of the moral faculty is to decide respecting the conduct, not less of others than of ourselves. By sympathy, we are enabled to put ourselves in the condition of other men; and we thereby obtain a better position for judging both truly and mercifully concerning their states of mind and actions, than would otherwise be possible.

Advancing in our investigation, the theory of universal benevolence appears. The origin of this theory of morals seems to have been the perception of the pleasurable emotion in acts of moral approbation, and the love which instinctively springs up in the heart towards those of whose conduct we approve. That *love* accompanies most acts of moral approbation, every one may ascertain from his own consciousness; but even here there may be perceived a distinction. When we pronounce any act to be just and right, we render it moral approbation; but the emotional feeling which accompanies it is not necessarily *love*—it may be admiration merely. We may be correctly said to *admire* a *just* or *right* action, and to *love* a *good* action. The theory of universal benevolence does not therefore include the entire province of the moral faculty; consequently it cannot furnish a true and adequate theory, far less a true standard of morals. Further, as has been previously stated, the theory of universal benevolence has never been found to have any practical existence among mankind; nor can it give to its decisions the impress of authority. Even the philosophical writers who promulgate this theory, while they demand for the principle itself approbation, do not venture to brand the want of it with decided disapprobation; and not one of them has himself ever attempted to exemplify its existence in his own conduct. Christians have done so, because they were actuated by a higher motive; but no mere philosopher has ever realized that theory by acting on its principle. The theory of Jonathan Edwards approximates to the truth in its consequences, but cannot possibly be operative, and to the greater part of mankind is unintelligible. *The love of being*, so far as any clear notion can be formed of such an expression, is not inconsistent with the authoritative dictates of revelation; but could neither have been formed from the philosophy of mind itself, nor can be so distinctly apprehended by

the mind, as to become the basis of moral thought, or the rule of moral conduct. I am inclined to conjecture, that Edwards began by taking the Scripture standard, the love of God, and then attempted to translate that into the form of a philosophical principle, and to couch its statement in philosophical language. If we may regard this supposition as a correct one, we are immediately put in possession of the explanation; but if we regard it merely as a philosophical theory, we are surprised that anything so vague could be produced by such a man.

The last theory which I shall briefly examine, is that of Butler, who terms the moral faculty *conscience*. In explaining his view, Butler is at pains to relieve it from the charge of selfishness. The necessity for this will be at once apparent, when it is borne in mind, that even the theory of universal benevolence has been termed "refined self-love." Butler shows that the fact of pleasure being conjoined with many gratifications of appetite or desire, does not prove these appetites or desires to be *inherently selfish*. The appetite of hunger craves food; and there is gratification or pleasure in taking the food so craved. But it is possible to conceive of the hunger appeased without that peculiar gratification; and it is certain that the simple sensation of hunger has no respect whatever to the gratification of the *sense of taste*. In like manner, every desire or affection seeks its own object for the sake simply of obtaining it. Pleasure, no doubt, is experienced in the attainment; but that pleasure formed no necessary part of the result sought directly under the impulse of the desire. When we seek the gratification or the good of another person, the obtaining of that result gives us pleasure; but the obtaining of that result was not the object we had in view: nay, in truth, the less we have any pleasurable result to *ourselves* in view, the more certain we are to gain it. Intense hunger or thirst pays no regard to the pleasure of the palate; but the hungry or thirsty man enjoys a degree of pleasure from even bread and water, such as the most thorough gourmand cannot even imagine. And the more entirely disinterested that any benevolent action is, the more exquisite is the gratification experienced by the generous benefactor. All these views of human nature tend to show, that according to man's original constitution, the mere desire of selfish gratification is not the ruling element of his nature; and although it were so, that no moral code or system could be

deduced from these views, yet they tend to show, if not to prove, that there was a pre-arranged suitability in man for the super-addition of a moral faculty.

That moral faculty is CONSCIENCE. Its function is to survey, and approve or disapprove, the several affections of our minds and actions of our lives. In its own nature it is supreme, and claims a rightful authority over all the faculties of mind and principles of action. It expresses approbation or disapprobation promptly and at once, without the lengthened inquiry which the theory of *fitness*, or of *utility*, or even of *universal benevolence*, would require. Its perceptions are intuitive, and its judgments intuitive. Emotion is in all its acts. When it condemns a man's own deed, the painful feeling of remorse arises; when it approves, a placid feeling of unutterable delight pervades the heart and mind. When it disapproves the mental state and actions of another person, he is regarded with feelings of aversion or indignation; when it approves, our emotions towards the man are those of esteem and love. When it declares respecting any contemplated action that it is *right*, we feel it to be our *duty* to do that action. If it regards any action with disapprobation, we are morally bound not to do that action. It tells us what duty is—we thence feel *moral obligation*; and we further feel, that if we violate that duty, we shall be *called to answer* for doing so: thence arises what we term *responsibility*. From this feeling of responsibility we cannot escape. I may conceal a wrong desire, or a malevolent affection, from every other human being, but I cannot conceal it from myself; and conscience will call me to account, if I cherish in the secrecy of my soul that wrong desire or malevolent affection. Whenever any desire arises in the mind, being an active faculty, it solicits the mind to act. But before the *will* can be put forth, the intuitive decision of *conscience* pronounces it *right* or *wrong*. If the *will* obey, and repel the promptings of desire, conscience approves it, and there is peace and delight. But if the *will* rebel against conscience, and comply with the *desire*, the sentence of disapprobation is pronounced, and the punishment of remorse is inflicted. Thus conscience asserts and indicates its supremacy, even when it is unable to control the promptings of *desire* and the rebellion of the *will*.¹

¹ There has been already allusion made to an important question which might be here investigated, but shall be little more than re-suggested. The

One reflection remains still to be made. Since conscience is thus proved to be the supreme ruler of man's action, so far as anything in human nature can be a law to man, how comes it that its authoritative dictates are so frequently violated? Does it not thus appear, that there exists in the mind of man a conception or idea of moral rectitude far higher, purer, and more true, than he can ever realize? Further, is it not matter of every day's observation, that, from the judgments by conscience on the conduct of others, in cases where self-interest or passion does not bias or overbear its dictates, there is produced what may be termed *a common conscience*, which rules society with even greater supremacy than it can the individuals that constitute society? Again, we sometimes perceive a perverse resistance to the dictates of conscience in corporate bodies, of a kind and to a degree that no individual in those bodies would venture to display alone, because the feeling of responsibility has been lost or greatly weakened by its diffusion over the corporate body. All these views tend to the same point. All tend to prove that neither conscience itself, nor any system that can be framed from its general dictates, can be the standard of morality; and that conscience, though it claim supremacy as its right, is not able to enforce that claim. The conclusion is obvious. Man's sovereign faculty has been dethroned. Man is a fallen and enslaved creature. This even philosophy might discern. This the word of God asserts and proves.

It is not my present purpose to dwell on the conclusion to which we have thus come, either for the sake of explaining or of enforcing it; but it may be useful to state briefly, and in a succinct form, the results of our investigation respecting man's moral nature.

office of conscience, it is proved, is to distinguish between right and wrong; but what is that quality common to all *right* actions, on account of which they *are* right,—and that opposite quality, on account of which *wrong* actions *are* wrong? I have said that conscience does not *create* the distinction between right and wrong, but only *discerns it*, and then *fervently* and *authoritatively declares it*. It will not do to say that actions are right because conscience approves them; for that would be reasoning in a circle, and saying that conscience is the faculty which approves what is right, and that *that* is right which conscience approves. Conscience itself, therefore, is not the ultimate standard of morality. That standard is the will, the law, the character of God; and conscience is the faculty which teaches the duty of conformity to that law.

The idea of morality appears to be this : when we behold, or mentally contemplate, any action performed by ourselves or others, we immediately perceive something in the action which we pronounce to be *right* or *wrong*. In this perception and decision we are conscious of an emotion of pleasure or of pain within our own inner being ; and we perceive the merit or demerit of the agent, and feel towards him the sentiments either of love or of aversion. Neither the intimations which we receive from our bodily senses, nor the ideas furnished by our intellectual powers, call forth this idea of morality, or place the mind in this moral state. The active powers of the mind constantly tend to put man in positions in which there must be some controlling power to regulate their action, and prevent the incessant struggle which would otherwise arise between man and man. No considerations of *fitness*, or *prudence*, or *utility*, or even *benevolence*, can meet the necessity, because all such considerations require a range of knowledge and a compass of induction altogether unsuitable to the nature of the office to be discharged. But we are conscious of the existence within us of one high faculty which intuitively perceives, and promptly and authoritatively decides, every question that requires a moral decision, pronouncing this decision with authority, and giving to it the sanction of the pains or pleasures of emotional blame or approbation. This faculty we term the Moral Faculty, or Conscience. It claims an imperative supremacy ; and “were its might equal to its right, it would rule the world.” But it often cannot enforce its dictates. Its decisions are liable to be overborne by impetuous passion or rebellious will. It is a dethroned sovereign ; but it still retains a sovereign’s character, and asserts a sovereign’s rights, almost always inflicting punishment even where it failed to prevent wrong. Were it utterly extinct, man would cease to be a moral creature ; were it always obeyed, he would always do right, and be happy. As it is, he is both moral and unhappy, his violations of conscience being the main cause of his unhappiness. Nothing can more clearly prove that man is a *fallen creature* ; and in a merely philosophical point of view, the essence of his *fall* consists in *conscience having lost its due and rightful supremacy*. Besides, since conscience, even in its highest state, is not the standard of morality or the framer of moral laws, but the percipient of morality and the interpreter

of moral laws, it can be but a delegated sovereign, a viceroy of a Higher Power, in whose character eternal and immutable morality resides, and where will and law, embodying that character, form the ultimate standard of morals. To Him, therefore, must conscience apply for restoration to its lost supremacy, and for such aid as may remedy the disorder and misery of man's fallen moral nature. Not otherwise can man be rescued from degradation,—not otherwise can man be restored and saved.

SEC. II. THE WILL, LIBERTY, AND NECESSITY.

Our course of argument constrains us still to continue to direct our attention to man; because, as we have already found, it is impossible to prosecute our inquiry further into nature, without taking self, or self-consciousness, with us, modifying as it does all our inquiries, giving to nature its interpretation according to the laws of our own being, and often suggesting valuable topics of investigation into the character of those laws which we perceive to be in operation. We have already been led to make some passing remarks on several of the topics which will come under discussion in this section; but as they were then before us almost exclusively with reference to external nature, we did not think that to be the proper place for anything like an adequate discussion of them. But as we are now intentionally combining what self-consciousness tells us of man, with what we can learn from external nature, we regard ourselves as fully at liberty, and even required, to make as much use of human nature as our limits will permit. But let it be still borne in mind, that we are viewing man as a part of *objective nature*, and placing him *objectively* before us, that we may have some competent conception of what the combined argument of nature and man, still an *à posteriori* argument, can give us in our study of Natural Theology, preparatory for the higher topic at which we shall in due time arrive. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that we retain our right to the free use of all that *à priori* or *axiomatic thinking* has fairly given.

While endeavouring to explain the moral faculty, we were led to direct our attention particularly to that which seems to be its essential element—its constant reference to *actions*, and

through them ultimately to those states of mind which prompt to action. This necessarily leads to the inquiry respecting the source of action in the mind itself, to what it is in any state of mind that produces action. When we reflect on the operations of our minds with regard to action, we are conscious of a peculiar forthputting of the mind's own energy, in consequence of which a change is produced, either in the emotions of the mind or in the operations of the body, according to the internal energy so exerted. To this internal mental energy we give the name *Will* (or volition).

Let us now look somewhat closely at the mental act which we thus designate. Some bodily *appetite*, or some *desire* or *affection*, arises in our complex frame and nature, and attracts our attention. We either follow the impulse or we reject it; but although the impulse arose from the natural appetite or desire in which the mind was passive, the mind is active in exerting its own energy, for the purpose of gratifying the appetite or desire, or refusing that gratification. Or we may take a higher view, in which the operations of mind are more directly contemplated. Reason places before us two or more courses of action: we reject the one, and follow the other. We may have taken into consideration the qualities of these courses of action, as good or evil, beneficial or detrimental; but there is something more implied, when we positively determine to exert our powers in prosecuting the one rather than the other. In any and all of such cases, the mind puts forth a peculiar power, to which we give the distinctive appellation *WILL*. This we regard as a primary faculty of the mind—the very faculty of action. But as it is the state of mind producing action of which the moral faculty takes direct cognizance, and on which it pronounces its sentence, we are thus brought to perceive that our *moral responsibility* has an essential relation to the *will*—that nothing can justly be called moral or immoral unless it be *voluntary*.

Again, when we contemplate the idea of responsibility, we at once perceive that it implies the power to act or not to act, according to the dictates of the will. We invariably feel, that when we can truly say of any action that it was compulsory, that we could not possibly act otherwise, in consequence of some *constraint* or *restraint*, we feel ourselves relieved in that instance from the feeling of responsibility. And the reason

plainly is, that in any such case our own *will* was not consulted or concerned, or was perhaps overborne by a power which it could not resist. Hence we are led to the conclusion, that to render any state of mind or action *morally right* or *wrong*, it must arise from the free dictates of *our own will*, not under any irresistible compulsion or restraint. And as the *will* is the primary principle of action, we thus conjoin the ideas of *moral responsibility* and *free agency*, which we regard as inseparable.

Other ideas speedily arise as we proceed in our investigations. Perceiving that the decisions of the will were called forth by the appetites, desires, affections, reasons, prospects, hopes, and fears, which arose in the mind, we term these *motives*, regarding them as principles, or primary elements of mental motion, or calculated to excite the moving powers and faculties of the mind. To the *motives* thus contemplated we ascribe some influence in eliciting the exercise of the *will*. Some even assert that the will is always determined by the strongest motive—an assertion which seems to me to be founded on a misconception of both *motive* and *will*, particularly the latter.

Further, we perceive that when the *will* determines, *action* follows; and we put forth an energy which affects either the operations of our minds, or the position of external things by means of our bodily exertions *willed into action*, or both. Hence seems to arise the idea of *power*, and our conviction that we ourselves possess power, both over the states and operations of our own minds, and over the functions of our bodies, and thereby over things external to us. This idea of *power* gives rise also to the idea of *causation*, or of *cause and effect*; and from our consciousness of having the power of producing *change*, we conceive that every change which we observe must have been caused by some efficient power. It is true that in abstract metaphysical reasoning we are unable to detect power and causation, and find ourselves unable to proceed beyond the perception of constant or invariable sequence. But while this may be all that mere metaphysical research can prove, it does not exhaust the intuitive conception of the mind produced by its own consciousness, which, notwithstanding all metaphysical arguments, and equally among all mankind, entertains the ideas of *power* and *causation*. The primary seat of this power is in the *will*, as *mind* is the *first efficient cause*.

Still further, the moral faculty asserts our *responsibility* for our conduct. And in tracing out the conception of responsibility, we find it inseparably connected with the belief of our own *free agency*. But this leads us to inquire in what free agency consists; or how man can be a free agent, and yet every event be foreseen and governed by God. This introduces one of the most dark and difficult questions which the human mind has ever attempted to investigate, and at the same time one of the most important in its bearing upon both morality and religion. The question is, How can man enjoy that liberty necessary to a free and responsible agent, and yet all things that come to pass be predetermined and foreseen by God? Into anything like a full discussion of this great question I cannot here enter; but as I am convinced that some light may be thrown upon it, even from a brief explanation of the various ideas brought before us, and some arrangement of them when so explained, I shall proceed to the attempt, with great diffidence indeed, remembering by whom the question has been treated.

The leading term to be used is the *WILL*. In that term, I am persuaded, there is generally contained too much, from which no small portion of the confusion wherewith the subject is darkened has arisen. There are, as I conceive, two different though kindred states of mind indiscriminately designated by the term *will*. The one might be expressed by the word *willingness* (*voluntas*), the other by *choice* or *determination* (*arbitrium*); in Greek by *θελω* and *βουλομαι*. The difference between the two is shown by attending to the difference between saying *I am willing* and *I determine*; the one is essentially *passive*, the other is essentially *active*. In the state of mind which I would express by the word *willingness*, the mind receives an impulse from some motive placed before it, applying to it and soliciting its consent. Should that consent be granted, a more active state would follow, and the mind would put forth its own inherent energies to realize the motive thus presented. But in this a new idea is evolved, and the mind directs its attention, not to the motive, but to its own act and power. Should it not consent, it would still put forth so much energy as might be required to repel the motive, and refuse to produce external action; or the same result might follow from the mere determination to withdraw attention from the motive. This is the more active state which I would

express by the word *arbitrium*, in which the mind exercises the *faculty of choice* between two or more motives, courses of conduct, individual actions, desires, affections, or anything that requires choice, or implies choosing before acting. Motives act on the (*voluntas*) *willingness*, or percipient faculty, and tend to elicit a feeling which would say, "I consent, I am willing;" but they can only solicit the *arbitrium*, the *faculty of choice*, the true WILL, which says, "I determine."

Motives must be carefully distinguished from *efficient causes*. All appetites, desires, and affections are *motives*, but can all be governed; all sensations are of the nature of motives, but can be conquered; all ideas of reward and punishment, all anticipations of advantage and disadvantage, of good and evil, are motives, but can all be resisted. When we use the expression, *efficient causes*, we ought continually to restrict its application either to physical nature, and to the mechanical forces which move and regulate it; or to those direct and spontaneous operations which mind puts forth voluntarily. If we give the name *cause* to *motives* at all, we ought ever to remember that a motive is a *final cause*,—that is, its operation is produced by the *end*, or *object to be accomplished*, which it places before the mind. When a man places before his mind some object which cannot be attained but after years of strenuous and steady exertion, that object is the *motive*, or *final cause*, or *end in view*, for which he *chooses* to make the necessary exertion; but mentally considered, the *choice* is the *efficient cause* of his conduct. But when the action of a lever or a screw produces a change in some portion of physical matter, we regard the lever or screw as the *efficient cause*.

And here it may be of advantage to observe, that this difference in these two great orders of causation arises out of the inherent and constitutional difference between *mind* and *matter*. The *power*, or *efficient cause*, which acts upon *matter*, requires, in order to the certainty of the result, that *matter* shall be absolutely *inert*, passive, without the power of motion in itself, and therefore capable of receiving any motion impressed on it. The *power*, or *final cause*, applied to *mind*, requires, in order to the certainty of the result, a being who proposes to himself an end, chooses means, and thus *puts himself* in motion. The action or influence of motives depends, therefore, on the *faculty of choice* in the mind of man. There cannot, therefore, be com-

pulsion in any motive, because *compulsion* and *choice* are contradictions; and we have already seen that compulsion destroys responsibility. We never apply moral judgment to any action resulting from compulsion,—or in other words, in which there is no choice: or were we to apply a moral judgment in such a case, it would be to the *antecedent*, and not to the *immediate agency*.

So far our path seems to be clear:—The *will* is the *faculty of choice*;—*motives* solicit but cannot compel it;—*moral causation* presupposes the faculty of choice, and has its power not *on*, but *in* that faculty. Hitherto we have found nothing inconsistent with man's *free agency*, and consequent *responsibility*. This will also be found to be in perfect harmony with what every man is taught by his own consciousness,—that he *is* a *free agent*, and *responsible*.

But does not this imply such uncertainty as to render the very idea of foreknowledge a moral impossibility? Not so, if we rightly understand the terms employed, and the nature of the inquiry. Mankind are so conversant with material existences and material laws, that they almost constantly apply notions drawn from these to the nature and operations of mind, and thereby fall into innumerable fallacies in reasoning, and draw erroneous conclusions. The certainty of the results produced by *efficient causes* arises out of the adequacy of the physical force employed to produce these results, and the inertness of matter. But hence men fallaciously apply what seems a corresponding course of reasoning respecting the certainty of the results produced by *final causes*, and ascribe that also to power,—and that, too, a kind of power similar to physical force, or rather identical with it. But it should be borne always in mind, that *morality* does not consist in *power*, but in *will*, or the *faculty of choice*. It is in vain, then, to say that the influence of motives is according to their power,—that the *will* always acts according to the strongest *motive*. If the *will* were not the *faculty of choice*, this might be the case; but since motives can only solicit the percipient element of *willingness*, and may be rejected by the *faculty of choice*, the *true will*, acting freely according to its true nature, the result must ever be, not according to the strength or value of the motive, but according to the character of the faculty itself (by the term character I here mean its relation to conscience). We daily see identical

motives followed by very different results, not only in the conduct of different individuals, but in the conduct of the same person when a change has taken place in his moral character. This is easily explained when we look for the cause—the *final cause*—not in the motives, but in the moral character of the respective choosing faculties. It is altogether inexplicable otherwise. In order, then, that foreknowledge may be possible, we have only to conceive a Being to whom is known not only motives, but also and especially the character of the minds of moral agents. To Him there can be no contingency, no chance, no unforeseen event, not only because He pre-arranges all motives that solicit the *willing* and *choosing* mind, but because He knows its whole character, and so adapts each *final cause* to each mind that each man freely chooses what God had foreordained.

I am very far from venturing to say that this is a sufficient solution of the great difficulty, felt by all who have thought on these deep subjects. Many a man will feel that he acts most wisely when he contents himself with saying, that he cannot solve the difficulty; that he can believe each term of the proposition on its own evidence, and though he cannot reconcile them, is willing to believe them reconcilable, and to wait till in a higher stage of existence he shall receive more light. That is, when we try to conceive of the Divine Being, we cannot doubt that He foresees and pre-determines whatsoever comes to pass; and when we question our own consciousness, we feel that we are free agents, at liberty to act according to the dictates of the *will*, or faculty of choice: We believe each of those propositions to be true; and though we may not be able to reconcile them, we are content to leave their reconciliation to God and a future state of being. It might be added, that our finite faculties are necessarily in themselves unable to perceive at once both terms of any infinite truth, in any other way than as a seeming contradiction,—*the two extremes of a circle meeting*.

In the various treatises written on this deep and difficult subject, there are other terms frequently employed,—such as *liberty and necessity*, sometimes without any qualification, sometimes qualified as *philosophical liberty* and *philosophical necessity*. By these qualifications the terms *liberty* and *necessity* are distinguished from their common use, and so restricted to the exactness required in close reasoning. In common language,

liberty means freedom from external force, or from the obligations and restraints imposed by unequal law, or mere caprice; but *philosophical liberty* relates only to the *spontaneous determinations of the will*; and *philosophical necessity* implies that these determinations are the necessary consequences of the constitution of the person and the circumstances in which he is placed, or the motives brought before him. The idea of *philosophical necessity* does not imply external constraint produced by efficient causes, but rather the certainty and regularity of the sequences of mind, in consequence of their nature and connection, so that our states of mind follow one another according to certain mental laws, and arise with regularity in certain circumstances, rendering it possible to say, that the antecedent state being known, there is a philosophical necessity (or certainty) that *this* consequent, and not *that*, or any other indiscriminately, will follow. With this explanation, I would not strongly condemn the theory of *philosophical necessity*; but I by no means regard it as giving an adequate view of the subject; or as meeting the requirements of Natural, far less of Revealed, Theology. It does not, and it cannot, account for the sudden and great changes that frequently manifest themselves in human character and conduct,—changes so decided as to render it impossible to consider them the mere sequences of any antecedent state of mind. Nor will *philosophical liberty* explain or account for such changes, although it offers nothing against their possibility. But they may all be satisfactorily explained by the idea of a *power* (a divine mind) acting *in the will*, thereby enabling it to frame a new and unprecedented *choice*, and to put forth a new energy, of a higher and nobler character than it ever previously displayed.

This remark would lead us to look back and reconsider a view already taken. When directing our attention to conscience, we perceived that its high office is to declare respecting *right* and *wrong*, and thence to tell us of *duty*, *moral obligation*, and *responsibility*. In this office it comes inevitably into immediate contact with the will. For, since the function of conscience is to decide respecting states of the mind that prompt to action, and since, before there can be voluntary action, there must be volition, conscience must pronounce its judgment, not only upon the motive, and upon the percipiency, but even the will, the choice, before it becomes an act. When, therefore, motives

of any kind whatever solicit the will, and while it is preparing to choose, conscience utters its approbation or disapprobation, and tells even that proud faculty, the will, what *duty* requires, what *moral obligation* enjoins, and what *responsibility* demands. The *will*, then, is not without law; the *arbitrium* may not determine arbitrarily; the *faculty of choice*, however free, is not at liberty to choose good or evil according to mere caprice. Let the motives presented to it be as alluring or as urgent as they may, *conscience* pronounces whether they *ought* to be complied with or rejected; and it is the duty of the will to obey the dictates of conscience, to comply with the requirements of duty, and not put itself under the power of motives. The full import of this will be seen by adverting to a distinction already drawn between *voluntas* and *arbitrium*. Motives apply directly to the *voluntas*, or percipient part of the will: conscience addresses itself ultimately to the *arbitrium*, or determining element of the will. The freedom of the will consists in its consenting to, or rejecting, the motives, according as they are approved or disapproved by conscience.¹ In this manner it may be seen, that the freedom, rectitude, and power of the will, must be exactly proportionate to the enlightenment, purity, and truth of the conscience; and that the servitude, pravity, and rebelliousness of the will, must be exactly proportionate to the darkness, and corruption, and perversity of the conscience. Hence we conclude, that a darkened and depraved conscience, and a corrupt and rebellious will, form the great maladies of man's moral nature. And were we to pursue this line of investigation, we might further prove, that, in this condition, man's will is under the power of motives, which are external to himself and not under his own control; and that this renders him the very slave of motives, and not the free subject of the moral law of conscience, working within the will, and thereby securing the free action of the "royal law of liberty,"—perfect liberty, and perfect law.

If the preceding view be admitted to contain anything like

¹ The arrangement might be conceived of thus: 1. Desire, or emotion, or motives; 2. *Voluntas*, percipient willingness, also merely emotional; 3. Act of the moral faculty, intimating approbation or disapprobation; 4. Act of the *arbitrium*, or true will, or choice and power; 5. Ultimate act of conscience, in punishing if disobeyed, or rewarding if obeyed, by remorse, or happiness.

a true and intelligible account of the will, or faculty of choice in man, as in my opinion it does, it will furnish an explanation of some very obscure and difficult questions in moral philosophy. The free agency and consequent responsibility of man will be found to consist in the accordance between will and conscience. The influence of motives will not be regarded as determining the will, but as calling forth the moral action of both will and conscience in their conjoint determination whether these motives should be complied with or resisted. It will be seen also, that in this is one of the distinctions between man and the lower orders of animated nature; for while they always obey motives, man can either obey or resist them according to the decisions of his higher nature. But it will likewise be seen, that the will, though essentially free from the control and dominion of motives,—of everything that can solicit its attention through man's sentient and intellectual nature,—is not without law; that conscience claims the right of directing the determinations of the choosing faculty; and that yet, when it complies with the directions of conscience, it acts most freely, because it acts from no compulsion from without, but from a congenial impulse from within. And in the case of both conscience and will, there is a direct recognition of an authority entitled to prescribe law to both;—law, to the supreme authority of which conscience herself appeals, whenever will refuses to listen to her dictates,—this law to which conscience appeals, ought to dwell in the inner being of the will itself, and to be its own ultimate law. But what does this great thought suggest? Does it not suggest that this inner law of will and conscience must be conformity to the mind, and will, and character of the Supreme Author and Ruler of our whole being? In compliance with that, we must enjoy perfect liberty and perfect happiness. In our vain endeavour to escape from it, we subject ourselves to the thralldom of motives, over the existence and the tendencies of which we have no power. This is not the doctrine of philosophical necessity; yet it does not controvert the doctrine of divine foreknowledge. The Divine Being, by whom we were called into existence, cannot but know our inner nature. All motives are at His command. If we comply with His divine will, obey His law, and act in conformity to His character, the result is certain; but if we refuse so to comply, we fall under the power of motives, and the result is equally certain. When we

obey Him, we conquer motives, and His will is done. When we disobey Him, motives conquer us, and yet His will is done. In either case the result is certain, and can therefore be foreseen ; and yet our free agency is not otherwise impaired than as we impair it by our own act, which still involves our responsibility.

It may be further seen, that in all this there is nothing different from what takes place with regard to the other departments of our complex nature. With regard to our sensations and perceptions, these follow the laws of physical being, and cannot be conceived of otherwise than as they are, being in complete and amply proved harmony with the external universe, so far as we can become acquainted with it, as has been shown by one of the ablest and clearest of modern thinkers. Our intellectual nature is also equally obedient to the laws of intelligent thought, which all operate necessarily, and according to the constitution of our intellectual faculties. In like manner, there are moral laws, bearing upon our capacity of recognising *right* and *wrong*, *good* and *evil*, and of *willing* to choose the good and refuse the evil ; but in this, the very highest department of our nature, these laws not only imply and recognise, but are expressly directed in accordance with, the principle of freedom to choose, and are therefore truly *moral*. Apart from the known laws of sensation, perception, intellection, and morality, we cannot conceive feeling, thought, and will ; but these laws do not impede, they constitute, freedom of thought or intellection, and moral freedom, or the faculties of will and conscience. To feel, think, and act in accordance with these laws, is what constitutes our most perfect freedom, and our greatest happiness ; because it is to act in accordance not only with the will of our Creator, but also in accordance with our intuitive ideas of duty and rightness—with the character of God. There can be no action truly either moral or immoral, which is not voluntary ; but this does not exhaust the idea of morality. It must not only be the voluntary act of the faculty of choice ; it must have been chosen in compliance with the sense of duty—the conviction that it was good and right in itself, and therefore *ought* to be done, and was therefore *chosen* and *done*. Here, again, the harmonious and conjoint operations of will and conscience are seen composing the moral liberty of man. When the will chooses or rejects, not according to the solicitations of motives,—not even according to the promised rewards or threa-

tened punishments of law,—but according to the decisions of conscience, then the action is morally right and good, and the agent morally free. But when will rejects the decisions of conscience, and follows the solicitations of motives, the action is morally wrong, and the agent is morally enslaved—enslaved by passion, prejudice, or crime.¹

Liberty is not lawlessness; it is the free exercise of the laws of being, in accordance with the constitution and nature of the agent. What we term the laws of sensation and perception, are the operations of our sentient and percipient material and mental being in connection with material nature, and the intimations which we thereby receive when undiseased and free. The free operation of our intellectual faculties is but their exercise within their own province, and according to their healthful constitutional capacities. This is their liberty, though it be also their law.

By the addition of conscience, all these capacities and faculties become the subjects of another kind of government—a moral government. The acts of sense may be fallacious and hurtful, if the sense be diseased. The acts of intellect may be deranged, but their action, although insane, will be still intellectual. And the acts of our moral nature, though they may be in violation of its laws, are moral still, or, to use a more common term, perhaps more suitable, they are then *immoral*—vicious. The will may be solicited by any or by all the departments of our lower nature, but its duty is to obey the dictates of conscience, controlling all their solicitations. In its liberty to obey conscience, consists its freedom. And conscience

¹ All our natural faculties retain their primary nature, and act according to it: each is still itself, and not any other. But in consequence of the fall, they have all become misdirected, and have lost their due subordination. They must retain each its own functions, operations, and provinces: the animal cannot think by *feeding*; the intellectual cannot feed the body by *thinking*; the reasoning cannot produce even mental action by *meditating*; the faculty that wills cannot produce deliberative judgment by the exercise of its voluntary *choice*; the most determined choice cannot cause that to be morally right, which the moral faculty calls *wrong*; and the moral faculty cannot constrain the will to choose the right, when that rebellious mental power has already denied it to be *right*, and is perversely bent on the opposite. From the lowest to the highest, each should maintain its proper subordinate position, looking up to and obeying its superior; conscience, the last and highest of all, looking up to and obeying God. Thus would man at once glorify his Creator and be happy.

is bound to perceive intuitively the *right*, the *good*, the *lovely*, to decide accordingly, and to utter authoritative commands even to the faculty of choice. But the will has thrown off the due supremacy of conscience, and yet, in that rebellion against its rightful lord, has enslaved itself to the impulses of those motives which spring from lower sources. This is indeed lawlessness, but not liberty. In this condition man is the slave of nature, instead of wielding over it a free though delegated sovereignty, responsible in its exercise to Him alone who is the only Lord of the conscience.

To this conclusion, then, we have come by a fair and legitimate investigation of the science of mind: That man is a moral and accountable being,—moral and accountable throughout all the range of all the faculties of his physical, intellectual, and moral nature; that in the conjoint and harmonious operation of will and conscience consists his moral excellence,—conscience pronouncing authoritatively what is *right* and *good*, and will choosing and determining to act according to those decisions; but that some dire calamity has befallen the human race, in consequence of which conscience has lost its supremacy, and even its clearness of intuitive perception of the good and the evil, and will has rebelled against its dictates and put itself under the control of the appetites of our lower nature. All this we can perceive and prove without revelation; but any remedy for this we cannot find. We groan beneath our heavy moral bondage and degradation. We wished lawlessness, we have lost liberty. We cannot recover our lost freedom by any effort of our own: only by being born again can we again become free-born. He only can restore our freedom by whom we were at first created free.

SEC. III. ETHICAL SCIENCE, OR THE SCIENCE OF DUTY; VIEWED IN ITS APPLICATION TO MAN IN THE SOCIAL STATE.

In a previous section I endeavoured to give some idea of what many philosophers term the moral faculty, while I prefer to give it the more common name of *conscience*. I may still use the term *moral faculty*, as perhaps its strictly scientific designation; but I wish to be distinctly understood as attaching to that term the full meaning which is usually given to that

weighty word conscience. In the present section it is not so much my intention to treat of conscience as a mental faculty, or to inquire into its nature, as to view its operations and results in the constitution of human society, forming what I designate by the comprehensive name, *The Science of Duty*.

Nor is it the science of duty as it relates merely to human society that I purpose to consider; but the science of duty and man's social state, as connected with the science of Natural Theology, and as advancing our combined argument over the extended sphere of observation now spread out before us. For we cannot complete the investigation of our argument if we do not consider man in his social condition, as well as in his individual capacity; in his relations to his fellow-man, as well as in his relation to nature. Nay, in reality, the social sphere is the more important of the two; because in it we see not only the highest mental and moral powers of man brought out into fullest and most developed action, but also we are constrained to mark, in that state of developed action, an element which we should not be able to trace with equal precision and certainty in the individual,—an element which indicates with fatal distinctness and power the existence of some vast and disastrous calamity which has befallen the human race, or some fearful crime by which they have been involved in universal degradation and misery; rendering the construction of a true Natural Theology either utterly impossible if omitted, or a matter of the most urgently imperative importance.

If we retrace the survey we have already taken of human nature, and mark what man is, we shall at once perceive that in the very constitution of his mind there exists a necessity for moral rules, to govern his *appetites*, *affections*, and *desires*. But this appears most clearly when we view man as a member of society, and perpetually holding such intercourse with his fellow-men, that without the guidance of moral rules he might be incessantly inflicting or sustaining injury. From the very constitution of man, therefore, as a rational and social being, he is and must be also moral; and one of his most important studies must necessarily be, the study of the science of duty,—a study clearly pertaining to the domain of Natural Theology.

The question then arises, how man can learn the science of duty. His intellectual faculties are so constituted as to enable him to become acquainted with all around him. By their aid

he can trace, to a large extent, the relations of the whole of external nature. And by the kindred relations subsisting between his own physical frame and external nature, he can avail himself of the boundless resources with which the material world is stored. The combined action of his intellectual faculties, which we may term *speculative reason*, might give him a very wide survey of what should be most conducive to his own comfort and advantage. Yet when we attempt to conceive how far the exercise of mere speculative reason could reach, we are extremely prone to deceive ourselves, by ascribing to the possible efforts of *one* mind what never has been produced except by the mutual stimulus of *many* minds. There appears to be no abstract impossibility in supposing, that the speculative reason of a man bred up in a perfect solitude might proceed to the invention of many of the arts of civilised life, and that at least a succession of generations from such a man might arrive at them all. Yet the fact is, that the tendency of man is *not* to evolve a civilisation of his own accord, but rather to sink from civilisation into barbarism, if left to himself. Leaving, however, that subject, and supposing the speculative reason to be incessantly occupied in the investigation of the relations of nature for the purpose of directing them to his own advantage, what would be the result? There would be *selfishness*, or the desire and pursuit by each of what was conducive to his own advantage;—there might be what may be termed *prudence*, or the calculating and cautious respect to the interests and self-seeking desires of others which tended to warn him not to pass certain limits in his dealings with his fellow-men;—but out of any possible amount of mere intellectual perceptions and speculations on such topics, there could not possibly arise the sense, the feeling, the principle of duty. There might be the *expedient*,—there could not be the *right*: there might be the perception of what would be certainly though remotely advantageous, and for the sake of which present privations might be endured, and present exertions made; but there could not be the supreme conviction of the essential *rightness* of action or endurance merely because it was *right*, and from no prospect of future advantage to himself.

We may also briefly inquire into the information furnished by the *active powers* of the mind, as they are commonly called,—the *appetites*, *desires*, and *affections*. It will be at once per-

ceived that the very nature of these powers, or faculties, is to prompt men to action; hence their usual designation, *active powers*. The lowest class of these powers, the *appetites*, are not otherwise necessarily moral, than by the necessity arising out of their existence in connection with higher faculties, and in a creature otherwise moral. The stimulus of our natural appetites is necessary for securing the comfort and preservation of our physical being; but even from our possession of higher and intellectual faculties, we are called on to regulate our *appetites*, so that the indulgence of them shall not impair the exertions of the *intellect*. This consideration might lead to prudential self-restraint, self-government, and some measure of self-denial, and might thereby produce at least the semblance of morality; yet it would be only the semblance, for the essence of all such procedure is still a regard to individual advantage, which men endeavour to secure by the sacrifice of a present for a future gratification, when convinced that we shall thereby secure a greater amount of gratification on the whole. Apply to such a course of conduct the idea of *duty*, and you will perceive that you cannot make them coincide. Duty commands to do what is *right*, because it *is right*, not because it is prudent,—because it is right *now*, not because it may be advantageous *hereafter*. The morality of self-restraint with regard to our *appetites*, does not, therefore, arise out of our possessing an intellectual nature, but out of our having a moral nature; and though there may be many prudential regulations based on intellectual considerations alone, they will be found unable to ascend into those higher regions in which reside the great principles of *duty*, *moral obligation*, and *responsibility*.

It might easily be shown, that as man is a social being, our desires and affections do not and cannot terminate in self; but bring us into contact with other human beings actuated by similar desires and affections, which the principle of *sympathy* enables us almost immediately to realize. Sympathy has a close relation to the moral faculty, though it is not itself that faculty, as Adam Smith assumed, but acts as its unselfish percipient element. We cannot, however, dwell on this topic, but must proceed to what is more direct and important. Our desires and affections pervade the whole of our relations in society. The very earliest position in which the human being is placed, brings them into operation. The family relation

requires fidelity to the conjugal bond uniting husband and wife, which is essentially a moral obligation. It requires, further, the exercise of the parental affections, which are necessary for the protection and the support of children. Thus it leads to the desire of *personal liberty*, *personal safety*, and the *possession of property*; for without these the paternal affections cannot have free scope. If a man has not *personal liberty*, he cannot protect or support his household; if he has not *personal safety*, he cannot secure the safety of those dependent on him; and if he has not security for the undisturbed *possession of his property*, he cannot make his exertions available for the supply of nature's requirements. Out of this primary relation there may, therefore, naturally arise the conception of correlative *natural rights*, which man claims to himself, and by parity of reason must allow to others. We say *must* allow,—not *may* allow; because, without these, human society could not exist.

1. Out of these primary personal relations and natural rights are evolved certain great primary ideas, or conceptions of principles, which combine to form the social state. The first of these arises from our perception of the benefits and the pleasures of concord. This has its earliest home in the household, where it shows itself in that mutual love, which leads every member of the family to seek the good of all the rest in preference to what might seem his individual advantage. All desires that centre and end in the individual have a dissociating tendency, and lead to strife, dissension, and disruptive conflicts. That society may be possible, therefore,—much more, that it may be happy,—its regulating principle must be that of concord, founded on mutual regard, or mutual love, or *benevolence*.

2. Further, as our intercourse with society increases, we find the necessity of such a common understanding between man and man as may enable us to depend upon each other's words and actions. Falsehood and deceit tend to break up society, or to render its existence impossible. Hence we are constrained to make every effort to secure such a harmony between intentions and words, as to enable us, from a man's words, to place full confidence in the inward intentions which those words indicate. This coincident harmony between the mind and its external indices we term *truth*; and we naturally desire, for our own sakes and the welfare of society, that this moral principle should be maintained.

3. Again, out of these primary personal relations and natural rights there springs what we may term the idea of *justice*, the object of which is to secure to every man what is his own. This principle has for its sphere to regulate the desire of property according to what we may term fairness and liberality, as contrasted with the ungenerous and grasping influence of selfishness and covetousness.

4. We might thus, beginning with the family relation and expanding that into the widening circle of society, elicit from the constitution of the human being at least three great moral principles—benevolence, truth, and justice; and we might regard these as primary elements of morality, affecting all mankind, and essential to the comfort and wellbeing of the human race. But if we look still more closely into the constitution of the mind, we shall find that we have not yet fully explored its moral elements. For, as we have already observed, though neither the bodily appetites nor the intellectual faculties are themselves essentially moral, yet, when connected with moral faculties in the same being, they acquire a moral character, and are susceptible of moral rules. The control of the natural appetites by the higher faculties of our nature may be designated by the terms Temperance and Chastity. And as we are conscious of the feelings of debasement and impurity when the lower faculties are indulged to excess, and wrongfully, we may give to the moral sentiment which demands their due subjection the name *Moral Purity*. We thus conceive another moral principle, having for its domain the government of our entire lower, animal, or sentient nature, with all its appetites and desires.

5. Again, directing our attention to our intellectual nature, we perceive the necessity of having all our intellectual powers arranged and guided by such laws as shall regulate their operations in a steady and uniform consistency. Without such a systematic arrangement and uniformity of our intellectual perceptions and pursuits, we perceive that the human mind cannot make any truly valuable progress; nay, would be liable to sudden aberrations little short of insanity. Hence another general idea of fixed and regulating *law*, as an indispensable condition essential to moral progress, which is itself an essential necessity and duty to man. And this general idea we may designate *Order*.

We thus obtain *five* primary principles of morality; viz. *benevolence, truth, justice, purity, and order*. All these may be deduced from the constitution of man, as an intelligent, rational, and social being, and may be regarded as the primary principles of *natural and human morality*. Let an appeal be made to *conscience* on any or all of these principles, whether they be necessary for its proper exercise, and we may confidently anticipate its response—that they are, each and all, essentially related to it, included in its nature, necessary to its exercise, and implied in the science of duty and in the domain of Natural Theology.

Admitting, then, that *conscience* approves of the five great moral principles thus enumerated, the next step is obvious: they must be regarded as the essential rules of moral action, or, in other words, as *moral laws*. They have all that is requisite for the formation of laws: there is the conception in the mind, the approbation of the conscience, and the consent of mankind in general. But when we conceive of them as becoming embodied in the form of law for the regulation of society, we are enabled to perceive the importance of pure and sound ethics to the welfare of the community. The law of any nation cannot possibly rise higher, practically, than its morality; for it is in truth the embodiment of that nation's morality, reduced to rules for the government of society. It may often happen that the law of a nation is morally defective; and so far the public morality of the nation may also be defective: but should a juster view of moral obligation, and clearer conceptions of what is morally right and good, be promulgated and enlighten the public mind, the defective state of the law would be seen, and it would be soon improved according to the standard of a higher and truer morality. Hence the duty of moral culture, for two great ends—the enlightenment of the legislature, and the enlightenment of the community. Either of these may precede the other. The lawgiver may have far more true and lofty conceptions of what is morally right and good than the community can appreciate; and if he attempt to frame laws in conformity with his own conceptions, he may find that the community will reject them as visionary and impracticable. Even Solon could say, "I have not given the Athenians the best laws possible, but I have given them the best that they can bear." And an infinitely more wise Lawgiver could say,

"It was because of the hardness of your hearts." On the other hand, the public morality of the nation may become more enlightened and true than that of the legislature, in its administrative function especially, and may strive to procure some amendment of defective laws. This, too, may be for a time resisted by the ruling powers; but that resistance cannot very long continue to prevail against right, for *morality* must in the process of time mould and regulate *law*.

Moral principles, it appears, give rise to moral laws; and moral laws embody and confirm moral duties and moral rights. Our moral *duties* are thus rendered *realities*, which may be to some extent enforced by the rewards and punishments of law; and our *rights* are *realities*, which may be protected in the same manner. Thus by the sanctions of law there must be continually going on a course of moral culture throughout the entire community, to the extent at least of the morality embodied in the laws of the country. The duties and rights thus realized and enforced may be comprised under the following heads: The Right of Personal Security, the Right of Property, the Right of Contract, and Family Rights. The infringement of any of these rights is a moral wrong, both against the individual and against the national law, by which the individual is protected in their peaceful and secure enjoyment. Were we to enter into an examination of these rights in detail, we might easily show that they are all in perfect harmony with the dictates of a sound and enlightened conscience. And we cannot fail at once to perceive how much they are fitted to support the general welfare, and to secure the harmony, peace, and happiness of the social state of man. But our view will be defective indeed if we do not also perceive that there are thousands of minute particulars contained within the wide generalities of public law, public morality, and public rights, the protection and enforcement of which must of necessity depend on the strength, purity, and faithfulness of individual conscience. Law can but apply to the action, and cannot reach the state of mind from which that action proceeded, and in which its moral nature truly resides. Even though we were to regard national law as embodied national morality or national conscience, we must perceive that it can neither perform the functions nor supersede the authority of the individual conscience. Hence it must follow, that no reform of national laws, however important

or extensive, can ever of itself secure the moral welfare of the nation. *That* must be secured in the bosom of individuals and families—in the enlightenment and purification of conscience itself—in the infusion into the inner being of a law and a light to which even conscience must do homage, and must find freedom and power in obeying.

There is another view that may be taken of the moral principles already mentioned. We have pointed out their harmony with the dictates of conscience, as well as their indispensable necessity for the very existence of society. But when we look closely at their operation in the case of an individual, we become aware of a new and a very important aspect which they assume. Conscience pronounces its sentence of approbation or disapprobation upon any single principle, sentiment, or action. But human life, though composed of pulsations and breathings, is still a continuity; and moral life, though composed of a succession of moral states, is still a continuous moral existence. It is not the one action or sentiment, therefore, of which conscience takes cognisance, and on which it pronounces sentence, but the continuous moral existence of the man. And, to prosecute the analogy, as by the power of habit we acquire a facility in the execution of any physical task, becoming expert and skilful, so by the power of habit the mind acquires both readiness and energy in the exercise of its faculties, and in the reproduction of those emotions that prompt to action. The habit of frequently contemplating and acting in accordance with moral principles will naturally secure to those principles easy access to the mind, and a calm, steady, and almost continuous influence over it. Thus the mind may acquire moral habits and a moral character; and as these moral habits must, of course, have for their essence the leading moral principles, they may be designated by corresponding names. There may be, therefore, the *habit* of benevolence, of justice, of truth, of purity, and of order; and these *habits* we would term *Moral Virtues*. And as it is evident that some one of these moral virtues may, and commonly will, predominate over the others in the general tenor of a man's life, so that predominating virtue will give the distinctive name to his character, and he will be called peculiarly a benevolent, a just, or a truthful man. The very least consideration will show that a large proportion of practical morality is included within the region of *habit*,—

the region, that is, of the *moral virtues*, and their effect in forming and moulding character.

The same subject might be investigated in the precisely opposite direction. We might mark the violation of the great principles of morality, which conscience condemns, and the law punishes as crimes; and we might then trace the power of habit in facilitating the recurrence of those states of mind which prompted to the immoral actions. We should then perceive, that habitual violations of moral principle were aptly designated *vices*, and that their prevalence formed *vicious characters*. But it is enough for our present purpose to have indicated a course of inquiry, which the aspect of society renders but too easy to prosecute.

One inference, or rather field of inferential argument, we must, however, indicate. The power of habit in a moral point of view, and the formation of character, *virtuous or vicious*, according to prevalent habit, must be taken very largely into account, when we endeavour to form an idea of man's future state. It even enters deeply into the argument to prove the immortality of the soul. No power of metaphysical reasoning or confusion will ever induce any man to believe that there is not an essential difference between mind and matter. But if mind, by its own operations, can contract habits and acquire a permanent character, its separation from the body will leave it with that character still; and not only so, but the same habit will continue to deepen that character continually in a future state, so that it must be terribly true, that "he who is filthy will be filthy still," and eternity itself will but eternally increase his wickedness and his punishment. A change of character must take place in that stage of being in which alone character is formed and matured, else it must never take place at all. And the more cheering aspect of the inference must be equally true and certain, and in the future state "he that is holy must be holy still."

It has been remarked, that the predominance of our principle, and the habitual prevalence of its exercise in the conduct, forms the character of the man. Let it be further observed, that this is not a merit, but a defect in human character. The man of benevolent character deserves and obtains moral approbation on account of his benevolence; but his character would be much more perfect were he equally distinguished by truth,

justice, purity, and order. It is praiseworthy to have one virtue ; but it would be more so to have every moral virtue in equal exercise. No such man, however, exists,—no such man ever did exist, except THE MAN CHRIST JESUS. This exception, which I have almost unconsciously specified, points to the manner in which one class of the evidences of Natural Theology is deducible from the moral nature of man. For that argument proceeds upon the reality of moral principles in man, as implied in the very constitution of his mind ; whence the inference appears inevitable, that these must be the attributes, in absolutely infinite perfection and perfect harmony, of the divine Creator Himself, otherwise they never could have been in man, the creature.

We have briefly traced the leading elements and principles of the science of duty, as manifested in the social state of man, and essential to the very possibility of human society. But we must take yet another view of the subject, if we wish to see it fully. The moral principles already enumerated form the basis of moral character in the individual, and of the moral laws of society ; but they do not secure the moral conduct of the individual, and they are insufficient for the task of preserving the moral peace and welfare of society. All men recognise them as right and good in the abstract, but no man regulates his conduct according to their dictates. All men wish others to be guided by them, because all are constrained to admit that they are right and good, and tend to promote the welfare and happiness of society ; but self-interest, and passion, and vice interpose their pernicious influences, and all men, yielding more or less to these evil agencies, commit in their own cases what they condemn in the abstract, or in the case of others. And while all men perceive, with various degrees of clearness, the benefit of moral principles and virtues, and concur in passing laws in accordance with their requirements ; yet all feel it to be necessary to give to these the dread enforcement of the power of inflicting punishment. It is a melancholy view of human nature, but not more melancholy than true, that *human law has far more power to punish than it has to reward*,—that, in fact, its execution depends upon its power to punish, and not upon its power to reward. Men seem instinctively to know, and with tacit sullenness to admit, that it is much more likely that the best laws which they can devise and frame will be

broken, than that they will be obeyed. May not this be regarded as the reluctant admission of man, that he is a fallen creature,—that his own conscience cannot now govern him,—and that law, instead of being merely the regulating influence of internal principles, keeping his whole being in harmonious action, is now an external power, employed to constrain or punish what it cannot otherwise govern? This is a melancholy conclusion; but it flows inevitably from the facts of the case.

But even when taking this sad view of human nature, we may obtain some encouragement from a kindred topic which it suggests. The power of human law depends upon its punishments more than its rewards. Yet the absolute power, the power to punish, depends upon an element of a moral nature, not mere physical force. This appears when we contemplate a highly complicated state of society, in which the extreme capabilities of life are explored, and often placed side by side. Rank, wealth, refinement, and luxury are found possessed by comparatively few, and almost in immediate contact with vice, degradation, and misery too deep and fearful to be described. If, in such a state of society, the enforcement of the laws that protect person and property depended, either alone or chiefly, on physical might, they could not be enforced an hour; but the moral power of conscience comes to their aid, and even those laws are generally obeyed against which all merely physical interests would prompt the poor and the degraded to rebel. It is thus that conscience continues to exercise its due supremacy to so great an extent as still to be the guardian and the ruler of society. Even statesmen and legislators are to some degree aware of this great moral power, striving in general to engage it on their side, and shrinking from anything that would seem openly to outrage it, or weaken its influence. The interests of society would be greatly promoted were legislators wise enough to advance a little further in this direction, and to bend their energies to the incalculably important office of endeavouring to promote the cultivation of sound, pure, and elevated national morality. And how dark is the omen for any land, where its rulers rest their power to govern on their possession and employment of the means to deceive and corrupt! Yet, even such a condition is not hopeless. The general morality of the nation may be so much enlightened as

to counteract the immoral agencies of rulers,—to improve both the framing and the administration of national laws,—and ultimately to constrain governments to know that power must depend on integrity, and that truth and rectitude are stronger elements than deceit and corruption. But this can be the case only where the nation possesses the means of obtaining a true and pure moral culture, independent of the plans and arrangements of its civil rulers.

The conclusion that ought to be drawn from the views which have been taken, seems abundantly obvious. Both the psychology of the individual human being, and the structure of society, contain the most clear and conclusive proofs that man is a being of a moral nature,—that obedience to the dictates of his moral faculty is essential to his individual and social welfare and happiness,—that disobedience to those dictates involves him in misery, and exposes him to punishment: and yet, that his moral nature must have sustained some signal calamity, so great that he often cannot clearly distinguish what duty requires, and when he does clearly perceive these requirements, he very often violates them, and exposes himself to the punishments which either social law, or the law within his own breast, sooner or later fails not to inflict. In vain do moralists and speculative or philosophical statesmen attempt to frame codes of law constructed on the idea of moral excellence which conscience and speculative reason may unite to form. Plato may imagine laws for the region of Atlantis, and Sir Thomas More may conceive the moral government of Utopia; but the enactment and execution of such laws must ever continue impracticable, so long as it is a mournful truth, that the human mind is a fallen mind,—that the will is rebellious, the conscience dethroned, and even reason and intellect warped and darkened. Yet even such moral romances may subserve a higher argument. They seem to prove that the human mind is *essentially moral*; that even in its fallen and powerless condition, the *moral faculty* asserts its right to rule; and that, fallen and degraded as it is, it retains somewhat of its original majesty, and its aspirations after a purer and happier state than it now possesses, or can by its own efforts obtain. Like Milton's description of the great fallen spirit,—

“ His form had not yet lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared

Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured."¹

Such, and scarcely in a less degree, is *man*: a great and lovely moral nature ruined—fearfully and hideously ruined; yet amid the ruins displaying here and there, throughout its entire range and structure, indications and proofs of its original dignity and excellence;—may we not add, intimations of a possible restoration to more than its pristine and glorious majesty, should He who framed it for a living temple to Himself repair its prostrate ruins, rebuild it, and render it again His everlasting abode?

SEC. IV. DESIGN IN MAN.

We have already viewed generally the argument drawn from design, meeting and explaining some of the objections commonly urged against it. But we have not yet viewed that argument as directly applied to man, considered *objectively*. And yet it is when applied to man when thus considered, that this argument is felt to be most convincing. Nor is this at all surprising, when we reflect that man himself is the most complex being in nature, and therefore must furnish the greatest number of peculiar instances of nicely adjusted arrangements and adaptations. In the human being we find wondrously united all the elements that can be found in all nature beside; together with some peculiar to himself, and by their very peculiarity giving new relations, and new values and functions, to all that he has in common with the rest of nature. We find in man what may fairly be termed the *synthesis of mind and matter*; and in that marvellous synthesis we find the means of understanding *nature* better than can be done without contemplating man objectively, and of understanding *man* better than we could do without contemplating objective nature. But we find also very special and most important indications relative to the character of the *one Author of both man and nature*; and thus we find our argument for the solution of the great problem approaching nearer and nearer to its true conclusion.

We shall, however, take but a brief sketch of part of the argument, though peculiarly inviting; because it has been very largely treated of by a number of able writers on the subject of

¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book i. 591.

Natural Theology. Pre-eminent above all may be mentioned Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, with Dr. Chalmers' comment on it, and Paley. It will be enough, therefore, merely to touch the leading points, and mention the most important inferences.

In a previous section the following definition was given, and is here repeated, that we may have it clearly before us when about to trace its application, as contributing greatly to form the basis of Natural Theology:—DESIGN is the arrangement and adaptation of *means* for the accomplishment of some intended *end*. To this we also added, that the very idea of design implies an intelligent and intending, or a *designing mind*. This definition is involved in our own consciousness, and therefore neither requires proof, nor is capable of demonstration, because it is immediate—it is *axiomatic*.

Let us first trace the evidence of design in that portion of created being with which we are most conversant—in human nature. In order to do this systematically, we may begin with the lowest and ascend to the highest of the faculties and powers of the human being, according to the principles of psychology.

The physical structure of man must thus be first considered. In this department, however, I may well be brief, as it has been made the basis of Paley's comprehensive and complete argument,—comprehensive and complete so far as that application of the argument is concerned. Indeed, the force of the argument of design, deduced from man's physical structure, can scarcely be felt without some acquaintance with anatomy, as every reader of Paley must be aware; and for that reason also we are the less inclined to use it. Yet it is impossible for any person to contemplate the structure of the *ear* or of the *eye*, and to mark their absolutely perfect adaptation as instruments of *hearing* and *sight*, without feeling at once constrained to regard them as designed, and even as most skilfully designed, for that purpose. The more fully that the laws of optics are examined and understood, the more completely are we enabled to perceive the arrangements and adaptations of the eye, in accordance with those laws; and in the same proportion does it become evident that the eye was designed for seeing, and that He who formed the eye had that design when He formed it. Light and the eye are manifestly designed for each other. But the existence of blind men, and the recurrence of night and darkness, are permanent proofs that *light* can exist without the eye,

and the *eye* without light; so that they cannot be regarded as mutually productive of each other, but both as separate things, called into being by the same Creator, and mutually adapted by His designing mind. This remark would scarcely deserve to be made, were it not for the purpose of alluding in passing to the theory of the *law of development* as recently promulgated by a pseudo-philosopher, if I should not rather say a philosophist, of the Lamarckian brood, according to whose notion *light* might develop itself into *eyes* when the need for those organs arose.

Were I to enter into anything like a full investigation of man's physical nature, I should be inclined to do so with reference to *three* divisions of the bodily senses—*touch*, *hearing*, and *sight*. And the reason why I should do so is this, I am inclined to consider both *smell* and *taste* as modifications of the sense of *touch*, rather than as separate senses themselves. Not only is *contact* required in both of them (which also may be said with some propriety of *hearing*, though in the latter case it is through the medium of the *air*, which stands in the same relation to hearing that *light* does to *sight*), but they minister more directly to the benefit and pleasure of our bodily wants and enjoyments than to those of the mind, while *hearing* and *sight* are more related to the higher elements of our nature. *Touch*, *taste*, and *smell* may be said to bring us into immediate contact with material nature, and to have for their main object the promotion of our physical welfare. *Hearing* has for its chief function the direct intercourse of mind with mind, and relates mainly to our intellectual cultivation. *Sight* enables the mind to hold intercourse with the beautiful in form, the sublime in magnitude, the distant in space, and to hold something like a spirit's rapid and wide-sweeping converse with the universe. Thus I would regard these three sentient principles as adapted specially, though not exclusively, to our threefold nature—*touch* to the *bodily*, *hearing* to the *intellectual*, and *sight* to the *moral and spiritual*,—*body*, *rational soul*, and *spirit*. Were this mode of examining man's complex nature followed, it might enable us to arrange the whole in a manner at once extremely simple and extremely comprehensive. That *sub-sense*, as I would term it, *taste*, or special modification of *touch*, would show at once the wisdom and the beneficence of the Designing Mind, who bestowed it on man. The pain of hunger might stimulate to the taking of food; but the design

of our Creator was to render even the support of life a source of pleasure, and therefore He so constructed and endowed the palate as to convey a pleasurable gratification, in addition to the mere allaying of hunger's pain. Further investigation would inform us, that in general those kinds of food which are most salubrious are also most agreeable to a simple and unvitiated taste; and this is an additional proof of the wisdom of the Designing Mind, and also the benevolence, in an adaptation which tends to such benevolent and wise results. This is peculiarly manifest when we advert to the corresponding fact, that every kind of medicine is at once poisonous and unpalatable. Medicines are intended only for man diseased, not for man in health: therefore they cannot be food; and therefore also is the relation between them and the sub-sense of *taste* such as to unfit them for common use. In this a wise and benevolent design is very perceptible. A closely similar, almost identical, course of remark might be made with regard to the sub-sense of *smell*. All pleasant smells are healthful, if not in excess and in stagnant air; while all unpleasant smells are more or less pestiferous, especially when densely collected, and the air in a state of stagnation. Compare the pestilential swamp and the breezy upland,—the air of a sick-room, or a fever-ward, with that of the violet-sprinkled bank of a winding rivulet.

We have already adverted to the perfect and permanent harmony between external nature and man's bodily senses,—so perfect and so permanent, that from earliest infancy man cannot doubt that his sensations and perceptions convey to him a true knowledge of external nature. It may be frankly admitted, that man cannot perceive anything but according to the laws of his own sentient being; and it may seem difficult to prove that external nature is really such as he thus perceives it. But, on the other hand, it cannot be proved that external nature exists otherwise than our sentient nature presents it—(I say *presents*, for I hold the theory of *immediate perception*, not that of representative images);—and we find that our perceptions are invariable; that they never deceive us, when awake and in good health; and that therefore our intuitive convictions of the reality of nature and the certainty of its usual sequences meet every moment the most perfect fulfilment. In all this there is the most ample proof of design,—and *that* design boundless in

its wisdom and benevolence with regard to man. We may therefore, with the most implicit confidence, direct our inquiries into any of the channels presented to us by our bodily senses, whether with regard to the structure of those parts where such senses are peculiarly placed, or to the intimations respecting external nature which they give us. In every one of those channels the evidences of design abound, and on that evidence the most complete reliance may be placed. The language of all is the same: "He who formed the eye, shall He not see? And He who planted the ear, shall He not hear?" "We are fearfully and wonderfully made."

From the bodily structure of man we ascend to his intellectual powers, or faculties. We shall not expend time in examining these psychologically, according to the manner in which they are commonly viewed in systems of mental philosophy, but may take a more comprehensive view of man's intellectual constitution, and regard it as that department of man which elevates him to the rank of a rational creature. In addition to his bodily senses, he has *intellectual faculties* which enable him to take cognisance of his own sensations,—to form by their means an intelligent conception of the material world external to himself,—and by reflecting on the operations of those intellectual faculties, to become acquainted with himself,—to become a conscious and *personal* being, and not a part of nature,—by comparing his own sensations and perceptions, to become conversant with the great harmony between man and nature, and thus to acquire a degree of elevation and dignity, and also a capability of crime, of which mere animal nature could not be capable. In this advancing view of man, it will be observed that the entire of his physical sensations are presupposed, together with the perceptions of those sensations of which his own consciousness makes him cognisant. These, however, are not in the intellectual being fleeting, one succeeding another like successive waves, each effacing the impression made by its predecessor. For the intellectual faculty of *memory* takes possession of them, stores them up, compares them with each other, and makes them the elements of knowledge. And the knowledge thus amassed is necessarily of two kinds;—knowledge of external nature,—and knowledge of the operations, and ultimately of the laws, of the percipient and intelligent mind itself. One direct form of this knowledge may be termed

experience, being the collected results of previously observed facts and incidents; but having in it little more, it may be, than the exercise of memory, and not capable of conveying any such idea as that of necessary certainty.

We have already observed that the expectation of constancy in nature's sequences is antecedent to experience. It is of importance further to remark, that when in any case experience seems to contradict our expectation of any natural sequence, we do not immediately reject the previous conviction of nature's constancy which we had entertained, and conclude that there is no such constancy; but we conjecture that our observation must have been defective, and we proceed to investigate nature more closely than before, that we may ascertain what is the true order of the sequences which are and will be constant. Hence arises arranged experiment, which is purely an intellectual operation. The intellectual faculty, commonly called *Imagination*, comes here to our aid; and we analyze and recombine our past information collected in the stores of memory,—we suppose combinations, frame theories, generalize, deduce, and endeavour to arrive at certainty in our investigations respecting nature. The knowledge thus acquired, ascertained, and matured, we can turn to valuable account. Having become acquainted with nature and with self, we can reproduce, recombine, and modify the powers or forces of nature so as to render them immeasurably the more conducive to the supply of all our wants of every kind, and to the increase of all our comforts and enjoyments. In all this we cannot but be conscious of *design* in our own mental operations; and if we at all prosecute this line of thought, and consider the very manifest adaptation between *nature*,—whose laws and operations may be thus known, combined, and modified for our advantage,—and *beings such as we are*, constituted with intellectual faculties which enable us to acquire that knowledge and make that use of nature, we cannot fail to perceive the most marvellous perfection of *design* in this harmonious adaptation of man to nature, and of nature to man. Does not this prove, beyond all dispute or cavil, the infinite wisdom of that Divine Being, and equally His infinite goodness, who is the Creator of both man and external nature, who formed the material world, and breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and whose *design* in their harmonious construction is so apparent and so gracious?

It is not only not possible to trace the argument of design fully, but it is not possible to perceive the most important element of even the intellectual aspect of human nature as connected with that comprehensive argument, if we do not take into careful consideration man's relation to his fellow-man, because the largest portion of his intellectual existence is connected with the action of mind on mind. But this relation of man to man is more directly connected with what we consider the highest department of the ascending nature of man—his *moral nature*. From all that we have yet contemplated, we see the evidence of design signally apparent, and there has not yet arisen, necessarily, anything to disturb our pleasure in the investigation. Even mistakes in man's intellectual convictions would not necessarily prove anything more, than that his observation of nature and himself had not been sufficiently comprehensive and exact to enable him to make, in such cases, the most skilful application of the one to the uses of the other. By such mistakes he cannot injure nature; and should he injure himself, as he very easily may, he would not incur the torment of remorse, or self-condemnation of a moral kind. So long as the intercourse of man is with *things*, not *persons*, his moral nature is not called into action. And although his *intellectual* nature may be, and often is, called into very strenuous and complicated action by his intercourse with persons, yet the *moral* is so greatly the predominating element in all *personal* transactions, that we think it necessary to regard man's moral nature as the province into which we are now entering.

The moral nature of man obtains its first development in the family condition or relation, as has been already shown. There the instinctive principle of parental love springs up, takes possession of the heart, and gives a new character to the whole man. There are now at least *two* or more comparatively helpless beings dependent upon him for everything that sustains and comforts life. He feels it to be equally his *duty* and his *delight* to bend all his intellectual powers, all his knowledge of nature and himself, to the pleasing task of protecting and cherishing them. Any neglect of these duties inflicts a pang, not of a physical or an intellectual, but of a *moral* nature, in his heart and conscience; and the adequate discharge of them is its own reward. He is now a moral being, and is thereby susceptible of a pure, and elevated, and disinterested kind of life

and happiness otherwise impossible. But we may contemplate all the various parts of the domestic condition and constitution, and we shall find them all productive of exactly similar results,—in the tender care and unwearied affection of the *mother*,—in the filial love, confidence, and generous respect of the *child*,—and in the mutual love and playful happiness of *brothers and sisters*. Can it be doubted that there is a deep, a wise, a benevolent *design* in the very nature of the family relations, and that the design is in that Creative Mind which so constituted man as to render the domestic circle the first sphere of the moral life and moral happiness?

The family relation naturally and rapidly expands into that of social life, with all its complicated and various rights, duties, and enjoyments. The sphere of man's being greatly enlarges. Innumerable wants, some natural, some artificial, spring into existence, and require the vigorous culture and exercise of his intellectual faculties, that he may understand his own position and that of others, may avail himself of the faculties offered to him, surmount the difficulties which oppose him, and perform aright the duties arising out of the relations and the interests of society, so as both to enjoy and to promote the common welfare. The full exercise of the *five* primary principles of morality, *benevolence, truth, justice, purity, and order*, is thus called strenuously forth; and the constant and habitual exercise forms them into the *social virtues*, which are designated by the same names. The existence of these principles, and the operation of these virtues, give moral security to man's social rights, even antecedent to the enactment of law sanctioning and enforcing such rights, as the recognised moral guardian of society. These *rights* may be comprised under the following heads:—the *right of personal security*, the *right of property*, the *right of contract*, and *family rights*. That all these rights are essential to the welfare of society, is too evident to require any proof or illustration; and they all not less evidently spring from man's moral nature, as drawn into full development by the social relations.

For it would be, not merely a narrow and incomplete view of the moral *duties, virtues, and rights* of society, to consider them, with some, as but the cautious compromise of cunning selfishness; it would be a thoroughly erroneous view, drawn from some miserable misconception of the proper origin of human society. The social condition is not a balance of con-

licting interests, sustained in equipoise by mutual antagonism ; the rights of society are not the aggregate of what man has won from man, and, by a species of suspended hostility or armed neutrality, manages to hold by the blended action of conceding and retaining. It is possible, doubtless, to frame a theory of man's social condition resting on such an hypothesis,—for it has been done by Hobbes ; and it can be so constructed as to account somewhat plausibly for all the phenomena which society presents. But it would be at once and for ever disclaimed by the primary element of man's moral nature, and also by the primary position of man's moral life. Conscience indignantly disclaims so mean and base a principle as that on which she rests her decisions. I do not concede to my fellow-men their social rights for no other reason than because I cannot otherwise secure the possession of my own. Not thus does the pure and generous feeling of moral approbation arise in my mind, when I perform my duty by doing what I intuitively hold to be right and good ; or see another man perform his, for a similar reason. Nor is the selfish hypothesis less repugnant to the primary position of man's moral life—the *family relation*. Is that essentially a scene of conflicting interests and armed neutrality ? Is it the dread of otherwise losing his own rights that causes the husband and father to protect and cherish his affectionate wife and helpless children ? Against so heartless a theory all the finest feelings of the bosom, all the holiest principles of the moral nature, start up in immediate hostility, and loudly proclaim it untrue. It is *love*, not *fear*, which forms the ruling element of the family relation, that primary position of man's moral and social life. It is the same benevolent and gracious principle which, expanding into the widest circles of social existence, pervades and animates the whole. And the supreme arbiter of all is Conscience, pronouncing that principle right and good, and giving to it the reward of moral approbation.

Following this view, we find, that all the moral virtues required for the peace and welfare of society are seated in the moral nature of man ; that they obtain their first and loveliest sphere of action in the domestic circle, which they constitute, sweeten, and adorn ; and that by their expansion they not only give rise to the social condition, with all its numerous and varied relations, but also constitute the primary principles of all its rights and laws. The result is obvious. We cannot

but conclude and believe, that the social condition was the *end* on account of which these principles were implanted in the human mind ; and throughout all their operations we have evidences of design, and find ample proof that the whole is the effect produced by the pre-arrangements of the divine designing mind of the Creator. Equally evident is the *final cause*, or ultimate intention of, the Designer ; which is, that our Creator intended us to form ourselves into society, that we might thereby and therein most fully develop the moral principles which He had implanted in our nature, and the most fully secure the happiness of ourselves and others,—of the entire human family if all would alike so act. The *social design*, therefore, as we may well term it, proves that the Designing Mind,—or *our Creator*, to use a more definite and better expression,—is Himself infinitely wise, powerful, and benevolent, and has so constituted man, that the fullest development of his highest principles most securely lead to, and result in, equally the welfare of the individual and of the entire community.

We cannot refrain from taking here one glance at the realities of the social state, as it at present exists. In the deliberate view which we have taken of the original principles themselves from which it naturally springs, we see nothing but what tends to goodness, peace, and happiness ; and in this we trace the character of the design, and of our Creator ; and should nothing jar it, we might expect to hear in the anthem of glad and grateful nature and man the echo of the Creator's own declaration, that all is "very good." But what find we in the social circle, on closer scrutiny ? Almost the exact reverse of what we ought to find. From the domestic circle to the extremest arrangements of the social system, we find moral principles disregarded, moral duties violated, moral virtues neglected, moral rights infringed, and moral laws broken. But we also find, that to what degree soever they are kept and obeyed, to that degree happiness is secured ; while misery prevails to the exact proportion of their violation. The argument of benevolent design is not, therefore, in the slightest degree weakened by the fact that the moral laws of man's moral nature are often disobeyed ; for it is still perfectly obvious that their primary design is to promote welfare and happiness, and their secondary to punish vice. The moral character of the Designing Mind is equally apparent in both, while the direct

and essential elements manifestly are wisdom, goodness, and benevolence.

There is still one view of man which must be taken, before closing the evidence of design as perceivable in the human being. There is in the human mind an intuitive conviction of its own *immortality*. Scarcely even the most degraded of the human race have lost the idea of an existence after death. Vague, indefinite, and unsatisfactory as are all the opinions formed on the subject by unassisted nature, and inconclusive as are all the arguments employed by philosophy in the attempt to establish it, still it is so accordant with the intuitive convictions of man's highest nature, that it finds a ready reception in almost every mind. And when we direct our attention to our moral nature, the idea of the *spirit's immortality* seems to form the very basis, the axiomatic principle, or necessary postulate, of all possible morality. What means the voice of conscience, approving good, and disapproving evil,—irrespective even of the personal advantage or disadvantage of him to whom it so authoritatively speaks? What means the great idea of responsibility that hangs ever sublimely over and around the soul, like heaven's own solemn dome? What mean the stings of keen remorse, fixed so deeply in the heart of the guilty man, destroying all delight in the selfish gratifications obtained by successful crime? What means the emotion of unutterable joy, too calm and holy to be expressed, which fills the soul when conscience warmly approves some action of disinterested generosity, of self-denial, or of self-sacrifice, good and right in itself, and beneficial to others, though involving, it may be, loss and suffering to him by whom the noble action was performed? What means the dread of retribution, which poisons all the pleasures and enjoyments of the successful criminal, even in the midst of his completest triumphs? And why is it that the oppressed and injured sufferer is supported under all his wrongs and afflictions by something within him, incessantly whispering of a righteous retribution, when all his wrongs shall be redressed, and for all his sufferings he shall receive an overpayment of delight? All these, and many similar, moral problems can have no solution other than that which assumes the immortality of the spiritual in man, and its continuous existence in a future state, where all shall be for ever perfectly right, and good, and happy; or where the terrible doom of righteous retribution

shall overwhelm the wicked with everlasting woe. This view completes the argument of design, as exhibited in the nature and constitution of man; and as it has direct reference to futurity, and to the rectification and completion of the design by the agency of the Designing Mind, having as its two constituent elements, *belief in the immortality of the soul*, and belief in the *existence and moral government of a Divine Being*, it may be termed *Religious Design*: that is, it goes to prove that our Creator designed us to be sentient, percipient, intellectual, rational, social, moral, and religious creatures, whose highest duty and greatest happiness should be found in knowing, loving, and obeying God, and in doing good to our fellow-men,—the two great rules of duty being, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind;” and, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

SEC. V. GENERAL VIEW OF DESIGN IN EXTERNAL NATURE AND IN MAN

We shall now pass out of the region of details, and endeavour to present an abbreviated summary of the whole argument from effect to cause, or the *à posteriori* argument as it is called, in its simplest but most comprehensive aspect. We shall therefore take a general view of design as manifested both in external nature and in man,—in the adaptations of man to nature, and of nature to man. The object in view is practical rather than argumentative. My meaning may be thus explained: A man might acquire a large amount of truly valuable knowledge by his careful and perhaps minute study of some department of science, or of cognate sciences; but the solitariness of his researches might have been the reason why there had not been developed in him any adequate ability to make use of the knowledge thus acquired. He might not be able to gather up into generalizations the results of his studious labours, nor to present them so generalized and grouped as to convey in a clear and matured form those results to others, who might have the desire but not the leisure to make the researches for themselves. If so, his study might be very agreeable and of some advantage to himself, but of very little benefit to others. If, however, a man studies that he may teach, acquires knowledge

that he may impart it to others, matures his own mind that he may nourish others with its ripe fruits, it must be of the utmost importance for him to learn how this may be most successfully done. With this view, then, it is my intention to give a specimen of the manner in which a considerable range of knowledge may be generalized and grouped, so as to present the results in a condensed form for the instruction of others. One preliminary point must be explained.

It would not be desirable to resume consideration of the much-agitated question respecting the grounds of our confident belief in the *regular sequences of nature*. But assuming that point to be settled, that we *have* such belief, and that it *never* deceives us, we come at once into contact with the phrase used to indicate these unvarying sequences, namely, "the laws of nature." It will be observed that this phrase is in direct antagonism to the theory of *ideal scepticism*, since it assumes the *real existence of external nature*, and the steady operation of those observed sequences which are termed, even from their invariableness, the *laws of nature*. But if it be opposed to *ideal scepticism*, it is, on the other hand, liable to be employed as the basis of *absolute materialism*; and indeed has been, and still is, very often so employed. I have no objection to the term, laws of nature, as a convenient and compendious mode of expressing the invariableness or regularity with which the phenomena of the external world are governed. But I am well aware that this phrase is often used as a cover for *materialism*, and for the very purpose of excluding the idea of a God. Such was the object of some of the sceptical philosophers of France in last century; and in our own country a similar attempt has been made, even within our own days. The materialism implied in the phrase, *the laws of nature*, may be met or set aside in various ways. One distinguished man¹ sets its force aside by showing, that the proper basis of the argument from *design in nature* is not the *laws*, strictly speaking, but the "*adaptations of nature*." And if we revert to the way in which we form the idea of *design*, we must perceive that there is great force in this answer. When, for example, we examine any piece of machinery, and infer the workman from the existence of the work, it is not from the inherent *laws* of the *materials employed*, be these what they may, that we infer design, but from the *adaptation* of the

¹ Dr. Chalmers.

parts of the machine one to another, and of all to the end accomplished,—it is from *this* that we infer *design*. In like manner, even though it were granted that matter may have been eternal, and that certain great laws, such as that of gravitation, may be essential to it, and may have been eternally inherent in it, yet the manifold *adaptations* which we everywhere perceive, would furnish an undiminished and an altogether irresistible argument in proof of design.

Admitting the force of this answer, I still think it desirable to meet that plausible phrase more directly. The danger to be apprehended in its use arises from its vagueness. What is a *law of nature*? By nature, we mean generally the material creation in its whole frame and in all its parts. If we view it collectively, we find a constant uniformity in its aspect, and in all its sequences. If we inspect it minutely, we find each part characterized by some permanent, and, as we might term it, *constitutional* peculiarity, distinguishing it from every other part; and by no art or skill that can be used can we cause one natural object to assume permanently the characteristics of any other. There arise thus two kindred ideas in our minds, the one applicable to the great movements, the other to the individual characteristics of parts, in what we term external nature. The word law may be applied to each, and is so applied. We speak of the law of gravitation,—the laws of motion in fluids,—the laws of the transmission of sounds,—the laws of optics; but we speak also of the laws of individual existences, of a class, or of a species,—as when we say of any thing, that it acts according to the laws of its own nature. The term law, then, as applied to *nature*, means either a *mode of action*, or a *mode of being*. But it neither does mean, nor can mean, anything more. It is merely a name given to a *definite generalization*. As we find it impossible to change the characteristics of individual objects, so we find it equally beyond our power to discover what the primary essences of these characteristics are. We cannot tell by what law of nature it is that *gold* is *yellow*, and not *white*, or that a *rose* is not a *violet*, and that neither can become the other. We can assign a *name* to its *mode of being*, and that is all. In like manner, with regard to the general laws that regulate the movements of nature, we cannot do anything more than assign *names* to their *modes of action*. If we seek to prosecute our inquiries, and ask the reason, or cause, of

modes of *being* and *action*, no other answer can be given than, that any object exists *as it is and not otherwise*, because the Creator has willed that such should be its distinctive mode of existence. The law of nature in any individual object is nothing but the will of God materially expressed in that object; and the great laws that regulate the movements of creation, are but the *modes of acting which God has prescribed to Himself in His government of the material universe*. The laws of nature, then, are but the *laws*, or rather the *will*, of God; and what we term their stedfast uniformity of operation, is but a *manifestation of His unchangeable character and attributes*.

But men seek to evade this conclusion by saying, that "God has *impressed* certain *laws* on *nature*, in obedience to which it continues to exist, and to act with unchanging uniformity, because these laws are invariable in their operation." But what is the meaning of this phrase—"a law impressed on matter?" What, in this acceptance, does the word *law* itself mean? A *law* is not a *thing*; it has not a substantive existence of its own. It cannot be traced in its own separate individuality, or personality, moulding with powerful hand material things into accordance with its own sovereign pleasure. *Law* is merely *mind willing the exercise of its own energies in some peculiar manner*. Its essential residence, therefore, must be in *mind alone*, of which it is merely an energetic modification, or the uniform operation of some governing attribute or faculty. This may be illustrated by reference to *human law*. The laws of a nation are merely the mind of the nation, putting forth a governing power, according to the determination of its deliberate reason and sovereign conscience and will. Human laws have no actual existence, apart from the mind of the nation; and should the mind of the nation change on any point, the law on that point would of necessity immediately change. A law cannot be impressed *on* a nation, and mould its conduct by *external* influence; but it may be infused *into the mind* of a nation, and mould its character and regulate its conduct by *internal* influence. Much less can a law be *impressed on insensate matter*. The simple truth is, that *law* is a term properly applicable to *mind alone*; it exists only where mind is; in mind alone it has its essential being; and by mind alone it *acts* and *governs*. Law is *mind* willing the exercise of its energies in

some peculiar manner: the laws of nature are the laws of God; their agency is the divine agency; their perceived agency is the felt presence of Him "in whom we live, and move, and have our being."

Let me add this explanatory remark: There is a fallacy hid in the use of the word law, in the phrase "laws of nature." Substitute the term *forces*, or *physical forces*, and the fallacy is removed. Nature is one vast assemblage of physical forces, one mass of physical force; but all the *force*, or *forces*, are silent, latent, inert, till thrown into new combinations, attractive or repulsive, by *will*, the *active energy of mind*, and in that there is *law*. God's sovereign will is the law of the universe; and when He made man a free agent with *mind* and *will*, He gave him the power of producing *causation* by using *physical forces*, in such new combination as his reason can devise and his skill execute. The sovereign will and first cause is in the Divine and Creative Mind. The secondary yet free will, and secondary cause, is in the human mind. God wields supremely the physical force which He lodged in nature, and it uniformly obeys Him: man acquires the knowledge of these physical forces, and uses them in conformity with their primitive nature, so far as his power may enable him. But in all cases the law resides in mind,—the supreme law in the Divine Mind that created, the subordinate law in the human mind that uses, these physical forces. The term *law* should never be applied to the *forces*, as it is liable to mislead and end in *materialism*.

To resume: The adaptations of nature are either *physical* or *moral*. The physical adaptations of nature may be subdivided into two departments: (1.) The adaptations of the various parts of inanimate nature to each other; (2.) and the adaptations of nature inanimate to nature animate, and conversely, the adaptations of animate nature to the positions in which classes and individuals are placed.

I. In directing our attention to the *first* of these subdivisions, we feel ourselves overwhelmed with the extent and variety of the field of observation. We might raise our eyes to the sidereal heavens, and trace the adaptations in *astronomy*,—the rates of motion given to the planets and their relative distances,—their revolutions round the sun, and their rotations round their own axes, with their inclinations to the plane of the ecliptic, securing to them the vicissitudes of climate and season,

—their mutual perturbations, or action upon each other, so arranged and balanced as to secure the stability of the whole solar system, which would have been doomed to ruin by the slightest deviation from these balanced irregularities. Can all this be contemplated without giving rise to the deepest emotions of adoring wonder, while the human mind is lost in endeavouring to imagine the wisdom which devised, and the power which governs, these mighty wheeling worlds!

We might turn from the contemplation of objects so vast, and enter into the regions of chemical research. Take the *atomic theory*, and mark the fixed permanence of the ratio in which various elementary substances combine with each other, —a ratio which we may use in all our combinations, but which we cannot in the very slightest degree modify or change. It may be, that the stability of the frame of material nature depends on these fixed atomic relations and proportions; but though we cannot affirm this, we may at least perceive the presence of a *designing mind* in these minute, or rather infinitesimal arrangements, rendering it impossible for any created being to disturb the harmony of the universe where He reigns supreme and alone, alike over the vast far-sweeping revolutions of suns and systems, and over the relations to each other of invisible atoms.

We might direct our attention to the vegetable productions around us, and try to trace the circulation of the sap in a blade of grass through the fine network of its microscopic vessels, or beneath the bark of the gnarled oak and rugged pine. We might mark the adaptation of the seasons to draw up these vegetable juices, to expand them into leaves and flowers, to ripen their reproductive fruits, and in some to cast them to the earth again to fertilize the soil with their clay, in others to consolidate into a new ring of thickening timber. We might trace the very peculiar process of the lichen on stones and rocks, eating into their solid substance, depositing earthy matter, and gradually preparing fresh soil, wherewith to repair the waste produced by sun, and wind, and rain, and rivers, and the sea. And in what appear the rare convulsions of nature—the subsidings of large districts of country, or their upheavings—the encroachments or retiring of the ocean—the drying up of lakes in one place, and their formation in another,—in all seeming perturbations and changes in the external configuration of the

world, we might trace design to preserve the just proportions and permanent equilibrium of our terraqueous globe.

Should we direct our attention to the *air*, so far as man has been able to analyse it, we should there also perceive the most perfect adaptation in its component portions, and also in the production of the various gases required to maintain its proportions and its consequent salubrity. Here also we might notice the effect of the earth's motion, both annual and diurnal, in producing the vicissitudes of seasons, and in not only attempering, but also purifying, restoring, and maintaining all genial atmospheric influences. How comprehensive, how complex, yet how permanent the arrangement, how wise and wonderful the *design*, how passing wonder the *Infinite Designing and Regulating MIND*!

In that most subtle of all elements, *light*, we might also trace the evidence of design, not only as manifestly as in the more palpable existences of nature, but much more so than in any other, so far as we can follow the almost spirit-like indications of its nature. So far as we can trace the operations of light, we mark in it the embodiment of elemental power and elemental beauty. In its marvellous modifications, called *electricity* and *magnetism*, we seem to mark the material, yet scarcely material, agency by which worlds are poised and swept around their mighty orbits, and at the same time clothed in loveliness; by the *magnetic poles* the stability of diurnal motion is preserved; by the surcharged electricity of the clouds all meteoric and atmospheric changes are effected; by the *prismatic sunbeams* the rainbow is cast across the cloud, and the most delicate tints are painted on the bosom of the opening flower. How perfect the adaptation of this wonderful element to the whole and to every part of the material universe! How infinite the wisdom of the *Designing Mind* by whom these adaptations were arranged! And how infinite the goodness which still preserves them in all their comprehensive and minute perfections! But it is in vain to attempt even to indicate the innumerable proofs of design written on the entire structure of nature, and pervading its every atom. Turn whithersoever we will, the universe displays the *power, wisdom, and goodness* of its DIVINE CREATOR. *His presence* pervades it throughout, displaying by the forces and dispositions of nature a visible revelation of what we may call *its*—*His*—own *natural attributes* of *infinite power, wisdom, and goodness*, which are the *laws* of which those physical

phenomena are but the symbols or the finite embodiments revealing that *presence*.

Before quitting this subdivision I would remark, that the intelligent study of what are termed the *laws and adaptations of nature*, whether in their common or special manifestations, constitutes *natural science*, and must ever form a very important part of human knowledge. But the study of natural science can never be prosecuted wisely and well if it begin not by the admission of the great principles of natural religion, and end not in their elucidation,—if it begin not by the admission that *nature is the work of God*, and end not by tracing reverentially *GOD working in and ruling nature*. It is, indeed, scarcely possible to prosecute the study of *natural science* without a constant, though it may be an unacknowledged, use of the argument of *design*. When any natural phenomenon arrests attention, the scientific observer almost intuitively asks, or supposes the inquiry, “What is its use?—what function does it perform?—what end does it subserve in the economy of nature?”—setting himself accordingly to find out the answer. Now, what is this, but an assumption of the principle, that it was there *by design*, and not *by accident*? By *whose* design? Not that of its *discoverer* certainly. By that, therefore, of its CREATOR, whose design it indicates to the intelligent inquirer.

II. The *next* subdivision relates to the adaptations of *nature inanimate* to *nature animate*; and conversely, the adaptations of animate nature to the position in which classes and individuals are placed. This subdivision of the evidence of design has attracted the attention of all intelligent observers, and is extremely fertile in proofs of a *designing mind*. It admits of almost boundless illustration. We might resume our examination of the *air*, and trace its adaptation to the use of animated creatures for *breathing*, and for the *transmission of sounds*. Or we might direct our attention to the structure of the *lungs* of man and animals, and mark their adaptation to the *air*. No one would seriously maintain that the air produced the lungs of an animal, or that the lungs of an animal produced the air; but every one might see that the *one* was adapted to the *other*, and therefore designedly so, by the Creator of both. Or we might examine the structure of *birds*, the inhabitants of the air, and mark how perfectly their lightness of form, their slender reed-like bones, and their feathery covering, so close and strong,

yet so aerial, fitted them for gliding through the air,—proving *that* to have been the *design* of Him by whom they were so fashioned and attired. We might explore also the waters, and mark the structure of the fishy races. There, too, we should perceive the manifest proofs of *design*, in the gills, the fins, the cartilaginous bones of some,—the hard and heavy shelly encrustations of others, and their almost immoveable position on rocks and sand-banks,—and the pulpy structure of others, floating loose on the billows, and almost destitute of sentient being, their organized existence a prepared food for others, its loss no perceptible privation to themselves. And in the compound structure of *amphibious* creatures, birds and beasts, we might see proofs of *complicated design*, rendering them equally adapted to land or water.

If from these lower regions we turned to *man*, we should be still more struck with the comprehensiveness and the perfection of *design*, as shown in his physical structure. Almost the first thing that arrests attention points out man's superior adaptation, though it might seem the reverse. Nearly all animals are peculiarly adapted to peculiar climates and regions of the world. Those that are clad in *fur* cannot inhabit the tropical climes, but find their appropriate abodes within the arctic and antarctic circles; while, on the other hand, the fine-skinned animals of the tropics cannot endure the rigorous severity of higher latitudes. But the very *nakedness* of man enables him to inhabit the entire world,—the frigid zones, when wrapped in the warm clothing which his *mind* enables him to fabricate,—the equatorial regions, by casting them aside. Thus is he fitted to “multiply and replenish the earth,” and to have universal “dominion over it,” as its inheritor and delegated sovereign. These topics are, however, so clearly obvious that I do not think it necessary to dwell on them. It must be enough to direct attention to them, as furnishing manifold proofs of most wise and benevolent design in the Divine Creator.

III. Leaving those lower, though very fascinating and instructive regions of the great argument, we ascend to those of a moral character, in which man himself is more directly concerned. The *adaptations of external nature to the intellectual and moral constitution of man*, form a very important part of the argument from design. The two main entrances of knowledge to the human mind are those of *hearing* and *sight*. Re-

garding these as mere *senses*, they are common to man and the lower animals; but they assume an immeasurably important character when we view man in his higher aspect, as an intellectual and moral being.

1. *Hearing* is then connected with *speech*; and immediately the whole field of intelligent intercourse between one living and embodied mind and another is opened. Now we perceive the adaptation of *air* to man's *mental constitution*, as we had previously done to his physical structure; with this difference, that its adaptations to the *mind* are far more varied and wonderful than to the *body*. How exquisite must be the adaptation between the *faculty of speech* and the *undulations of the air* to convey from one mind to another all the varieties of meaning that language can express,—and even by the delicate *intonations of voice and accent* to indicate shades of *thought and feeling, will and emotion*, which, but for these intonations, words could never utter! Attempt even to imagine how many thousands and millions of those airy undulations that propagate sounds are incessantly crossing each other in the all-embracing air, and then think how marvellous it is that they convey from mind to mind, by speech and hearing, the finest shades of thought and feeling. Surely in this there is *design*, “excellent in counsel, and wonderful in working.”

2. Not less marvellously perfect is the adaptation of *light*, not merely to the eye, but to the *mind that looks through the eye*, perusing the handwriting of God on the heavens above and on the earth beneath. The almost instantaneous speed with which light communicates intelligence to the mind, needs but to be mentioned. The information which it conveys from mind to mind by looks, and attitudes, and gestures,—by the clouded or the sunny brow,—the flashing or the melting eye-glance,—the dejected countenance or the smiling cheek,—enables man to read the very thoughts of his fellow-man, without the utterance of a single word. And with what exquisite adaptation to man's mental constitution does light, with its modifications, impart to nature the power of exciting and gratifying all the purest, noblest, and most gentle ideas and feelings of our moral and intellectual nature,—in the soft reviving greenness of a spring dawn,—in the bright glories of a summer noon,—in the sublimity of the starry heavens,—in the majestic terrors of a thunder-storm,—in the stainless

whiteness of the new-fallen snow,—and in the mild loveliness of some gentle dewy evening calmly sinking into peaceful rest.

3. We further mark this adaptation in a peculiar harmony between our *intuitive conviction of the certainty of nature's sequences*, and the *unsought law of association in the mind*. These two topics may be separately considered. We may observe and reason about *nature's sequences*; and we may also observe and reason concerning the *law of association*. By the *one*, we are led to anticipate the constancy of nature, and to frame the idea of *cause and effect*, of design and accomplishment: by the *other*, we trace the regularity of our own mental perceptions and operations, and thence both learn to frame *designs* ourselves, and to trace the design of Him by whom we were so constituted. The adaptation of these independent laws to each other is a manifest proof of wise and benevolent design, establishing a perfect harmony between man and nature, and rendering man truly nature's *interpreter*, as well as nature's *delegated lord*.

4. Another adaptation between nature and man's mental constitution demands attention. There are in nature certain *primary laws*, or *principles*, which contain many thousand subordinate modes of being and action. When we master an adequate knowledge of any of these great primary laws, we are able to command almost interminably all its subordinate modifications. In our study of nature we *analyse*, or follow the *inductive* method of investigation, till we reach some great primary principle; we are then able to reverse the process, and to proceed *synthetically*, or by *deduction*, applying the master principle, and commanding its subordinate modifications. Exactly similar is the constitution of the mind itself. In all reasoning, there are certain *first principles* on which all the rest depend. In *mathematical* reasoning, there must be the *axiom* and the *postulate*, before we can proceed with the demonstration. And in *logic*, there must be the *premiss*, or *major proposition*, before we can frame the argument. These first principles we ascertain either *intuitively* or by *analytic investigation*, and we then *synthize* or *demonstrate*. Now this peculiarity in our *mental constitution* is exactly adapted to the *similar constitution of nature*, and enables us to search for and ascertain those *first principles in nature* which give us command of all the rest. Does not this most signally prove the wise and gracious design

of HIM who framed both *man* and *nature*, and gave to the recondite elements of their respective constitutions an adaptation so perfect, at once stimulating and rewarding human intelligence?

5. In the preceding instances the adaptations are chiefly intellectual; but there are others of a *moral* character and tendency,—though the moral region of the human mind requires for its full development the intercourse of other minds. When we contemplate any *natural scene*, there springs up in the mind and heart the *kind of feeling most congenial to that scene*. This may be heightened greatly by imagination and association; but it has a reality in itself independent of these. The mind can and does cast the colouring of its own ideas and feelings over nature; but nature also suggests emotions to the mind without its choice, and through its mere susceptibility. The ideas and emotions of *sublimity*, and *power*, and *majesty*, and *peace*, and *gentleness*, and *beauty*, can all be thrown into the mind by scenes, of which we cannot avoid feeling that they display these characteristics. They spring up spontaneously, and take possession of the mind, as if by an inexplicable but most gentle and natural constraint. Many of our moral sentiments are thus most graciously renewed and cultivated by nature, when they had been jarred and blunted by our intercourse with mankind. We gratefully recognise in this a proof of most wise and gracious design, in Him who so constructed both nature and the human heart.

6. There is another moral adaptation, little noticed, yet of a very beneficial tendency. When we gaze on a well-cultivated district of country,—a flourishing and well-built town,—a well-constructed harbour filled with vessels from all parts of the world,—or a neat and sheltered cottage, wearing the aspect of peace and comfort,—we feel a *glowing sympathetic delight*. But, on the other hand, the sight of a bleak and barren upland,—a decayed and ill-built town,—a harbour choked with broken piers and mud,—a miserable and squalid hovel,—such sights fill our minds with painful and disturbing emotions. Does not this clearly indicate that God designed man to “keep and dress” the world which he inhabits; and that in doing so he promotes not less his *mental* and *moral*, than his physical welfare?

7. There is still one other instance of adaptation, of a

somewhat complex kind, that deserves attention. An accurate observation of nature will make us aware of what we may term a *law of compensation*. This is seen both in *animate* and in *inanimate nature*. It is seen in the trunk of the elephant,—in the long neck of the giraffe,—in the protruding eyes of short-necked and timid animals,—and in a multitude of instances which need not be enumerated. It is seen also in adaptations to climate, not only in animals, but also in plants; by means of which, some disadvantage is compensated by some counterbalancing advantage. It is seen in the poison and the panacea,—in the bane and the antidote. It is experienced more or less by all mankind, who, if they have peculiar trials to endure, enjoy also peculiar compensating gratifications, tending to equalize human happiness. This idea might be carried still further, and illustrated by the existence of remedial substances throughout nature,—by plants and minerals possessing medicinal virtues, and distributed all over the world, generally where they are most needed, but by means of commerce made available to all. Is not this a proof of *moral design* of a most wise and benevolent character, displaying the wisdom, goodness, and bounteous mercy of the CREATOR?

SEC. VI. RESULTS OF THE COMBINED ARGUMENT.

I do not intend at present to prosecute the combined argument any further in detail, but mean to give a brief summary of its results. Our investigation of its *first* element,—the *à priori* as it is commonly called, or *axiomatic thought* as we would prefer to term it,—has been conducted further than is usual among writers on Natural Theology, for this direct and, as it seems to me, very important and urgent reason, viz.: That from the realm of *à priori* thought have come forth many of those subtle theories, which cannot be properly met and set aside otherwise than by the use of *à priori* thought, still more profound and true than these speculative theories can be. Still another reason influences me not a little: I am decidedly of opinion that several of the plausible objections which may be raised in the province of *à posteriori* investigation cannot be so satisfactorily answered on merely scientific ground as they ought to be, nor indeed on any other ground, or by any other kind of reasoning than that which belongs to the *à priori* province.

In this section I shall first state the conclusions fairly deducible from the combined argument—the *axiomatic thought united with the evidence of design*; and then I shall give a summary outline of the entire argument in support of Natural Theology and its conclusions.

If we can form a clear and connected view of the results of Natural Theology, as deduced from its defensive arguments, we shall obtain an answer to such an inquiry as the following:—What can man, constituted as he is, and placed where he is, know of duty? Or, What has God taught man respecting duty, by means of his own nature, and the structure and arrangements of creation? There are thus two distinct, yet closely related and corresponding departments of the inquiry: two kindred voices declare the results. Man's own constitution gives him capacities of a threefold character—*sentient, intellectual, and moral*. These are essentially inherent in man, and conjointly constitute what we term *human nature*. Without taking cognisance at presence of what external nature indicates respecting the character of its Author, we remark that it is fitted to call into action, first and necessarily, the *sentient* capacities of man. When further traced, we find that external nature calls into action and cultivates also man's *intellectual* capacities, partly by means of the *perceptions* received into his mental being, and partly by means of the investigations to which it stimulates, and the reflex action of the mind, in tracing, remembering, analysing, comparing, recombining, and employing its own operations. Thus both the *sentient* and the *intellectual* departments of the human being are immediately called into action by means of external nature. And when we advance to notice the arrangements of external nature, so perfectly, so benevolently adapted to promote the comfort and happiness of all animated creatures, and indicating so clearly the *benevolent design* of the Creator, we find it suited also to the culture of man's *moral nature*. Still it is man's *social position* that most directly and constantly calls the *moral faculties* into action; and therefore moral philosophy, or the science of ethics, has chiefly to do with man as a member of society, holding intercourse with his fellow-creatures.

We might briefly direct our attention to *man's duty to himself*, as arising out of his own nature and constitution. Almost every man feels it to be his duty to keep the lower propensities

of his nature subject to the control of the higher. *Appetite* may stimulate; but the duty of cultivating his intellectual powers tells him that he must not indulge his appetites to such a degree as to enfeeble or impede his intellectual culture. Not merely the *appetites*, but also the *desires* and the *affections*, must submit to be governed in subjection to the dictates of duty. How often do men put strong constraint on the most urgent desires and the most tender affections, at what they regard as the call of higher duty! Thus man feels within him, interfused throughout the very constitution of his nature, the idea of duty; and though it be regarded as duty to himself, still it is the duty of the lower to obey the higher, of the physical to obey the intellectual, and of both physical and intellectual to obey the *moral*. This might suffice to elicit, and to cultivate to some extent, the idea of duty, and also of subordination; but it could not, of course, go very far, for the feeling of responsibility could scarcely be thus called into action, though some faint notion of it might be furnished.

But leaving this narrow, though interesting region, let us survey the more decidedly *moral* province of *man's duty to man* as a social being. All that is within man tells him, that he was created for a state of social existence. Man, in some peculiarly melancholy mood, may long for solitude and call it sweet; but very soon will he long for some companion with whom he may converse of its sweetness. But even the most limited companionship involves *duty*; and the love which prompts to companionship is itself the spring and principle of duty so considered. It bids him prefer his companion's welfare to his own, and it enables him to enjoy the most exquisite pleasure in promoting that companion's happiness. This, which may be regarded as the very first principle of man's moral duty as a social being, is in its own nature entirely unselfish,—so much so, indeed, that if the desire of self-gratification should obtain the ascendancy in his mind, all the real happiness instantaneously disappears, never to return till the selfishness takes its flight. Thus we may clearly trace the rise, even in the simplest form of the social state, of the first principle of *moral duty*, that of benevolence. And it requires no lengthened argument to prove, that the same principle is fitted to promote the welfare and the happiness of the most extended social condition—of the entire human race, indeed, throughout the world.

We might, in a similar manner, trace the origin of the primary principles of human morality; but as this has been already done in a former lecture, we content ourselves with their enumeration. These *primary principles* we consider to be the *five* following:—benevolence, truth, justice, purity, and order. All these we hold to be directly deducible from man's own nature, and they all tend directly to the welfare and happiness, alike of individuals, and of the entire community. Now when we employ this view of man as an important part of the argument of *design*, we come irresistibly to such conclusions as the following:—That God not only created man capable of happiness, but also implanted in his nature the primary principles of morality, so adjusted that in their exercise he should promote both his own happiness and that of society at large; that therefore these *moral principles*, when in full and regular operation, become *social virtues*, and give rise to *social rights*, indicating at the same time both the *design* and the *character* of the CREATOR HIMSELF; and that it must be man's *duty* to act in conformity with those principles of his own nature, and those indications of the *character* and the *will* of GOD. Human law, as has been already shown, can but embody and enforce those primary principles of morality. They have their first perceived origin in man's own nature; they owe their sacred authority to the intimation which they convey of the Creator's character; and the argument of design enables us to trace them up to HIM as their true and eternal source. And when, further, we direct our attention to the *moral faculty* itself, *conscience*, and mark that it never fails to express the most complacent and warm approbation of every act done in conformity to those primary principles, we find the argument complete; we find that the supreme and ruling faculty in man always approves of what conduces to good, and acts ever in harmony with God's wise and gracious design. From this department of Natural Theology, then, we receive the most wise, gracious, and salutary instruction; and are taught to find our truest happiness in obedience to the God of our nature and our life.

If we turn from the ethical province to that of *external nature*, we find that all the laws and dispositions of external nature teach lessons precisely similar. For while the laws and dispositions indicate in the Creator of the universe wisdom to devise and power to execute, infinitely beyond what we can

comprehend, they all tend also to good;—they are all so arranged and regulated as to produce the greatest amount of happiness and welfare to every sentient being, so far as our researches are able to extend. To the promotion of the welfare and happiness of man, in particular, they are most perfectly adapted. They readily yield for the use of his bodily frame all that it requires; their less obvious powers and adaptations are equally fitted to cultivate and to reward his intellectual application; and as he advances in his more recondite researches, they still display before him treasures absolutely inexhaustible. The argument of design becomes more and more apparent and convincing every step he takes. All nature is stamped with the manifest impress of its Creator; and everywhere, in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath,—in the viewless air, and in the mighty waters,—he hears the voice that proclaims, or reads the handwriting that records, the wisdom, power, and benevolence of God. The harmony subsisting between man and nature, and their perfect adaptation to each other, furnishes its part, and that one of great importance, in the argument. It is too manifold and too entire to be fortuitous: it is very evidently the result of the wise and gracious design of HIM by whose almighty voice both man and nature were called into being, and all their relations and adaptations determined and maintained; and this perfect harmony proclaims everywhere: There is but ONE GOD.

But we stop not here. Resuming the reasoning already employed, we conclude, that those *laws* which we have been contemplating, whether those which are *inherent in the constitution of man*, or those which are conceived of as *governing external nature*, are not only independent of man and nature, but are manifest and irresistible proofs of a *designing MIND*, whose character and attributes they indicate,—that is, of GOD, the CREATOR of *man and nature*. It is absolutely impossible to form any conception of either design or law, without the previous ideas of *mind*, and *personality*. *Law* implies a *mind* whose mode of action it is: *Design* implies an *intelligent and designing or intending person*. And the absolute unity of the design, in the harmoniously adapted constitutions of man and nature, as clearly implies the unity of the designing person. It would not help us in our attempt to form some conception of this great truth, were we to try to frame some such theory as those that

have long been too prevalent in Germany. What would it avail us to say, "that man himself creates nature, and gives to it the laws of his own being?"—or to say, "that nature is God, and that God is but nature?" The laws of *man* and *nature* are, indeed, coincident and harmonious, so far as we are able to trace them; but these laws are at the same time independent of both man and nature. Our daily experience teaches us, that we cannot *alter*, but must *obey*, the laws of our own constitution. It is equally true, that we cannot alter the essential forces of nature, but must comply with them even when we wish to use them. The only sound conclusion, therefore, is this: That there is ONE INTELLIGENT ALMIGHTY MIND, by WHOM both man and nature were called into being, according to one wise and benevolent design.

We have now reached a point in our disquisition when we are entitled to ask, reverentially, What are the attributes which the indications of Natural Theology, as collected and apprehended by a sound philosophy, enable us to trace, as inherent in that ONE INTELLIGENT, PERSONAL MIND, the GOD and CREATOR of *the universe*? In a humble and solemnized endeavour to prosecute this holy inquiry, we may, without impiety, conceive of those *attributes* in a twofold sense, *natural* and *moral*. From the indications afforded so abundantly by the external world we may most distinctly perceive what we venture to term, the *natural attributes of God*. The *natural attributes* thus indicated are, *omnipotence*, *omniscience*, *omnipresence*, *eternity*, and *spirituality*. When we use these solemn and great words, we must not deceive ourselves by supposing that we are able to form any definite conception of the ideas thereby indicated. By the word *omnipotence*, we mean to indicate our belief that the God who formed and rules the mighty universe, can do all things,—that to His power we can conceive no possible limits. By *omniscience* we mean, that divine attribute which we term *infinite wisdom*,—not merely the knowledge of what *is*, but the wise foreknowledge and pre-arrangement of all that *can be*, and of all that *shall be*. Nature's laws and adaptations indicate some portion of its boundless treasures; and from what we there learn, we feel warranted to term it infinite. By the word *omnipresence*, we express our belief, that as certainly as God's wisdom has devised, and His power created, the universe, so certainly His *presence* everywhere sustains it in being.

What men so commonly term its laws, are in reality but His modes of action, residing in His mind alone; and as we perceive their operation everywhere, so we believe that He is present everywhere,—that “in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” By the term *eternity* we mean, *His self-existence*, uncaused, underived, without beginning, and without end. We mean also what is often termed His *necessary existence*,—an existence having its cause of being in itself, so that it is impossible for it not to be. Both these expressions, *self-existence* and *necessary existence*, I include in the one great word *eternity*, which seems to contain them both. And by the word *spirituality* I mean, that quality distinct from material existence, of which we conceive mind, or thought, or intelligence, will, and morality, to be the essence. Such is a brief statement of what *Natural Theology* may teach respecting what we may call the *natural attributes of God*.

The *moral attributes of God*, as apprehended by Natural Theology, are indicated to us chiefly by our observation of the *moral nature of man*; although from the gracious arrangements of external nature we may learn much respecting one of them, which might be called *benevolence*, but more fitly *LOVE*. They may be enumerated thus: *infinite truth*, *infinite justice*, *infinite holiness*, *infinite love*, and *infinite sovereignty*. In man's moral nature we see the shadowy and faint image of these infinite attributes. Man did not give them to himself; neither can he divest himself of them: they exist in his nature, even when perverted and abused. They tend directly, by their proper action, to the good of the human race, individual and general. We cannot but believe that they must reside in infinite fulness and perfection in Him who called man into being, and impressed His own image on the human soul. The attribute of *infinite truth* is manifested in the pre-established and undeceiving harmony of man and nature,—the realization answering truly to the *design*. The attribute of *infinite justice* or *righteousness* reveals itself in the inward consciousness of every man, that rectitude is necessary to happiness,—in the instinctive and irresistible apprehension of retribution,—and in the many instances of it that pervade the world. The attribute of *infinite holiness* is dimly shown in the intuitive regard for purity, and delight in all things pure, which constitutes so large a portion of man's moral happiness. The attribute of infinite

love or benevolence is seen in the gracious arrangements of nature, is conspicuously displayed in the moral relations of society, and is felt in the deepest emotions of the heart and the loftiest aspirations of the soul. And the attribute of *infinite sovereignty*, while it is one that reason recognises as infinitely right, as belonging to God, is felt also in that intuitive perception of the benefit of supreme *order*, which makes man morally willing freely to submit to a due and necessary supremacy, wherein shall reside wisdom to direct, justice to decide, goodness to confer benefits, and power to govern. It is felt also in the intuitions of conscience, obligation, and responsibility, implying a lawgiver, a judge, and a sovereign. Such are the *moral attributes* which a well-directed study of Natural Theology may conceive as combining in infinite fulness and perfection to form the glorious and adorable character of GOD.

We are thus taught, that *man* and *nature* are alike the workmanship of the ONE GOD, whose *natural attributes* are *omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, eternity, and spirituality*. And that in His *moral nature*, His *attributes*, or, if we may so speak, His *character*, unites *infinite truth, justice, holiness, love, and sovereignty*. “Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name!” How justly is worship due to Thee!

I am by no means of opinion, that the mind of man, since the fall, ever did from the evidences of Natural Theology, and by the exercise of its own faculties alone, form such a conception of the Creator of the universe. But while aware that I am reading nature by the light of revelation, and consequently that I am able to perceive and understand its intimations immeasurably more clearly and fully than I could otherwise have done; yet as I have endeavoured to keep within the strict limits of what may be proved to be true in man and nature, I consider myself fully entitled to bring forward these intimations in their most complete development. By doing so, I may further observe, I am but acting in accordance with the rule suggested by the Apostle Paul: “The invisible things (or *attributes*) of Him are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they (mankind) are without excuse.” I may observe also, that though man “cannot by searching find out God,” as the book of Job teaches, yet in that very book there is most ample and powerful use made of

the leading evidences and arguments of Natural Theology. If, then, it be but too true, awfully true, that man *does not* from the teaching of his own constitution, and of nature around him, acquire that knowledge of and veneration for his Creator which he ought and might, it is necessary to prove that the blame is his own. "Because, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." This introduces a very grave topic.

Hitherto we have been contemplating man and nature according to what appeared to be the primary intention of their respective qualities, and as these qualities coincide and harmonize, and thereby indicate the primary *design* of their Creator. In this we have found the design to be invariably wise and beneficent, intimating, or rather manifesting, the character and attributes of the divine Creator Himself. But we have now another view to take; and it presents itself to us in the form of a startling contrast. *External nature* obeys its constitution and laws; and all is order, peace, and happiness. But *human nature* disobeys its constitution and laws; and all is degradation, convulsion, and misery. Man violates his duty to himself; he gives, it may be, full indulgence to the appetites of his lower nature, and by that indulgence renders the due cultivation of his intellect impossible, while at the same time he is refusing to obey the dictates of his moral faculty—*conscience*. Intemperate passion of every kind takes possession of him, and he sinks into a degree of degradation of which the lower order of animals is incapable. There is nothing that can be called inherently base, if only it rightly occupies its station, and fulfils its duties and *design*; but there is both baseness and criminality in that which voluntarily sinks below its station, and becomes incapable of fulfilling its duties and accomplishing the *design* for which it was created. Yet man cannot thus violate even his duty to himself with impunity. His outraged higher faculties inflict vengeance on him for his guilt. Conscious degradation renders him miserable; remorse lacerates his bosom; the wretched man becomes his own destroyer, and the avenger of his own destruction. He creeps about from one haunt of vice to another; he shuns the light of day and the presence of the wise and virtuous; he perishes—the despairing victim of his own crimes. But even this dread scene furnishes evidence of the primary design for which man was created, telling

him that *duty* and *happiness* are *identical*, *vice* and *misery* *the same*.

Man violates his duty to man ; he disregards the claims of benevolence, truth, justice, purity, and order, as these ought to affect his intercourse with his fellow-creatures ; and immediately, the laws framed for the protection and enforcement of those moral duties are armed against him. Had he acted in conformity with those claims, even human law, based as it is on them, would have been his protector ; and where it failed to secure adequate protection, the approval of his own conscience would have given the compensation of its irreversible approbation. But while, by violating these duties, he exposes himself to the punishment which law inflicts, he further rouses within his own inner being the terrible powers of a wounded and self-torturing conscience. He has acted in a manner which proves him to be the enemy of social welfare ; social laws are put forth against him ; and conscience tells him that he deserves to be thus punished or outlawed. And if, instead of thus contemplating the case of an individual, we look abroad over the whole social condition of mankind, we shall be constrained to perceive that the case is universal. Everywhere the principles of social duty, social virtue, and social law are recognised ;—everywhere they are violated, with or without impunity ;—everywhere we observe an uneasy struggle between *conscience*, which tells of duty,—*law*, which seeks to *enforce* or *protect* it,—and *culpable selfishness*, which seeks to *violate it*. The harmony of natural laws and adaptations is maintained in calm and peaceful ease ; but there is no such harmony in the laws of man's nature and his course of conduct,—it is discord, strife, suffering, and uneasy constraint, almost universally. Yet this, too, proves the original nature and design of man. It proves that he was created for social good, by proving that he cannot violate it without becoming miserable.

I might draw attention also to the fact, that, under the influence of passion or selfishness, man perverts or abuses the laws of nature, attempting to employ them in a manner for which they were not intended, and suffers from retributive justice.

But a higher thought arises. Man owes entire and constant homage to the Creator ; yet that homage he refuses to render ; and his wretchedness is complete, when his guilt thus

reaches its dire consummation. All nature around him and within him calls to that first and chiefest duty. The heavens display the glorious wonders of the *power and wisdom* of GOD;—the earth is full of the *goodness* of GOD. The *universe* is GOD's great temple;—the voice of nature is one universal hymn of praise to GOD. All creation tells of duty, obedience, and worship; displays it, and is happy. Man alone refuses. He does not, he will not, he cannot, because he will not obey; and man alone is miserable. His own conscience tells of duty and responsibility, turns over its upward reverential eye to heaven, appeals to divine *authority*, proclaims divine *right*, bows humbly before divine *justice*, and worships divine *sovereignty*;—but still man disobeys, and still the more feels within him the gnawings of the undying worm. Natural religion agrees with conscience, points out everywhere clear proofs of the wisdom, power, goodness, justice, truth, and sovereignty of God, utters its adoring anthem, and calls on man to join it and be happy. Still man disobeys,—feels himself the only discord where all else is harmony—the only rebel where all else is willing and glad obedience—the criminal of the universe! His own conscience condemns him; and he cannot escape from its sentence, nor can he devise any method of restoration to innocent obedience and peaceful happiness. Natural religion condemns the only violator of created duty, but cannot rescue, or help, the criminal.

Why is this? Natural Theology can give no explanation, for the fact is *non-natural*; and can afford no remedy, for that would require to be *supernatural*. This only—this and no more—Natural Theology can do:—it can prove that the cause of this wide-spread human wretchedness is *moral*, and that it *resides in man himself*. It is *moral*, because throughout all its range it is a violation of *duty*, an insurrection and rebellion of the lower elements of being against the higher, of the *sentient* against the *intellectual*, of both against the *moral*, and of all against GOD. How it has arisen, Natural Theology cannot tell. That it *resides in man himself*, Natural Theology can amply prove; for, turn to what quarter soever we will, and explore it as fully as we can, we nowhere else see any part of the universe disobeying the laws of its own constitution, and acting in a manner contrary to the evident *design* of the Creator. But this is what man perpetually does: he disobeys

the laws of his own constitution, and he acts in a manner directly contrary to the evident design of the Creator. This is an awful confirmation of the sentence which conscience pronounces; and it cannot be evaded.

Is there, then, no remedy for this dire malady under which human nature is perishing? In vain have philosophers and statesmen sought for some remedy in man himself. In vain have sages promulgated what seemed to them amendments of the moral code, for the regulation of social life; and equally in vain have statesmen sought a remedy by improvements in law, and in the arrangements of the body politic. The disease lies deeper far than such remedies can reach. It resides in the very inner being of man,—in the great facts of *conscience dethroned* and *will rebellious*,—in the depravity of a nature originally good and holy, but now evil and corrupt. From this dread condition there is nothing in man himself that can deliver him; and Natural Theology can point out no remedy. Yet there may be dimly descried in one department of the *evidences of design* on which Natural Theology is founded, something which at least seems to indicate that the Creator of the universe both can and will provide a remedy wherever there exists disease. For we find in the productions of nature not only the food needed for our subsistence, but substances possessing medicinal virtues fitted to alleviate suffering, to remove disease, and to promote restoration to health. Does not this indicate a gracious design in God to teach us, that though there is nothing in ourselves which can relieve us from our *moral* malady, yet analogy suggests that there may be an external aid, a mode of deliverance, provided by God Himself, which it is our duty to seek, if haply we may find it, and be saved? But if such a remedy there be, as it does not spring from man himself,—as it is only in the power of God to give,—as it must be a moral remedy,—as it must be revealed to us by Him who alone can provide it,—and as we have most ample evidence of God's benevolence and pity, may we not expect that He will reveal, or that He has revealed, to man this great moral remedy? Surely there is abundant reason to expect this—not because man deserves it, but because he needs it; and because God has so wonderfully proved His *willingness*,—we might rather say His *desire*,—to anticipate all our wants, and to bestow upon us all that is necessary for our welfare and true happiness.

Here, then, Natural Theology ends. It can discover that there is something wrong in human nature, some disturbing influence by which its constitution has been vitiated, the current of its laws checked or turned away, so far as regards their designed and natural operation; and that this disturbing and vitiating element affects first and chiefly the moral region of man's nature, and then all the rest through it, and as a necessary consequence. It cannot provide a remedy for man's dire and destructive moral disease, but it intimates to him enough, in the dim symbolical revelation of physical remedies for physical maladies, to preserve him from despair, to awaken and support hope, to arouse and encourage expectation, to stimulate inquiry, and to prepare for the reception of any remedy which may be proposed to him as provided by God, and proved to be so by suitable and sufficient evidence.

This is much, but it is not all. If the inquiries instituted by Natural Theology have been rightly conducted, they must have stated, explained, and employed those *laws of thought* which alone can guide to a right conclusion in any investigation. By the practised use of these, the mind may very securely advance in its inquiry into those evidences which are adduced to prove the existence and the truth of the Christian revelation. For if Natural Theology has already trained us to reason validly, to investigate profoundly, and to produce such views of the existence and character of God, and of the character of man, as those which have been just stated, it will be found to be impossible to believe, or rest satisfied with, any false religion,—any pretended revelation; and equally impossible not to believe the Bible—the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and to rest there, as on the true and only divine revelation given by God to man, for His own glory and man's salvation.

It must have been observed, that I have not introduced any arguments direct from Scripture; but that was because our inquiries hitherto have lain in the province of the natural, not of the supernatural. But we have ascertained the existence of *moral disease* in man, though we have not called it *sin*; and we have found that Natural Theology cannot account for *moral disease* or *sin*, nor for *death*, nor can it point out a *remedy*. For satisfaction on these points we must look to Revelation.

CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS TO WHICH NATURAL THEOLOGY LEADS: ITS EXTENT AND LIMITS.



WE have now traversed rapidly the wide realms of Natural Theology, and appear to have marked its nature and extent, and approached its limits. Let us, before quitting it, attempt to take a comprehensive survey of the regions we have traversed, the instruction we have obtained, and the position which we now occupy. What information have we obtained from *created nature* relative to the CREATOR?

Our investigations began necessarily by an inquiry into our own existence, and the laws and modes of that existence. We found ourselves constrained to admit and hold, that *self-consciousness* is the first element of man's essential being—the essence of awakening human thought in awakening life and intelligence. In self-consciousness we found the synthesis of sensation and perception, awakening reflection, and this mental state and act, at once a state and an act, necessarily implying the anterior existence of an agent; and that, too, an agent who both perceives and reflects, that is, a conscious existing and thinking being, which we term *Self*, or the *Ego*, or the *Me*, according to the language of modern philosophy. In this analysis we have traced our being back from its first sentient vitality to the life prior to the sensation and necessary to it—to the perception and the percipient intelligence anterior and necessary to the perception—to the conscious *me-self*, necessarily anterior, in the order of nature, to the reflex acts of perception and thought; and thus we have travelled back in our analysis to the region of *à priori* thought, so far as that region is possible to man. But this inevitably suggests the indefinite and inquiring conviction, that there must be some agent anterior to the *me*, also essentially a ME, possessing a self-consciousness, in some transcendent way related to our own

recently discovered self-consciousness, not destroying it, but including it, and giving it being. Here, however, we pause, for we are not yet prepared to prosecute an inquiry demanding such recondite thought.

But there was a different, and apparently a plainer, course of inquiry awakened in self-consciousness. In the very state in which self-consciousness arose, there had previously been sensation—the feeling of a resisting something in contact with our body and its senses. This resisting something is immediately conceived of as something external to the percipient, reflecting conscious self. We find that its resistance can be overcome, or used, according as we put forth our own muscular powers, at the dictate of our own volition. This external world now begins to manifest itself through our sensations, and by our perceptions to the conscious *me*; but this only makes the *me* more and more *self-conscious*; and while it is thus continually asserting *itself*, it is quite as continually declaring its convictions regarding the external *not-self*. The antagonism between the external and internal produces the rapid and balancing development of the self-consciousness and man's belief in his own mental and physical existence, on the one hand, and, on the other, of his perception and knowledge of the external world and his belief in its existence.

He may now turn and look more closely and intelligently into his own inner being. In doing so, he will readily become aware that his conscious self does not act capriciously, but follows a well-defined and distinctly traceable course, both with regard to the perceptions which it receives, and to the reflections which it makes. Thence arises the idea of *laws of thought*, and the power which these laws of thought exercise even in perception, and in the arrangement of all our perceptions. When our consciousness has achieved these laws of thought, it finds that it has obtained the power of regulating all its future inquiries, both with regard to its own existence, and with regard to what it may perceive and know of what appears to be *external existence*.

It is precisely in this stage of our mental development that the sophistries of scepticism are liable to arise; and they arise thus: We have arrived at the conviction that our own laws of thought give form and character to all our perceptions. A vague speculative notion may arise, that perhaps our imagined

perceptions are nothing else than modifications of our own powers and laws of thought. It is not difficult to perceive that there is not necessarily anything in external nature identical with our *sensations*,—that all of which we are actually conscious is nothing more than sensations and perceptions,—and that, perhaps, after all, there may be no real external world. This may puzzle or please the sceptical idealist for a time, and in his hours of speculative amusement; but it never disturbs him in his actual intercourse with man and nature, and he never believes his own scepticism. But even this practical refutation is not enough. A deeper scepticism arises, and tells him that he is just as unable to prove his own existence as he is to prove the existence of external nature. This he cannot answer, it may be, but neither can he admit it; for in its admission there is a self-contradiction: “I know nothing but this, that I know nothing.” What! the *Ego* denying and asserting itself in one breath!—denying and affirming its knowledge in one affirmation! This may be safely left without further answer.

But if, instead of following this mere *ignis fatuus* of scepticism, the mind, confident in the testimony of *consciousness*, which never deceives, prosecutes the inquiry further into its own state of being, it will find that, in a sphere of mental being, antecedent to those which were first called into action, there exists that element which *wills* its actions, and yet another and more regal element which expresses an authoritative judgment upon every volition and every action; and this, the ultimate state, or essence of mind, is both the true and absolute *me*, and has a dim reference to an *underived ME*, its own AUTHOR and SOVEREIGN. It thus attains the idea and consciousness of personality. Everything may be abstracted from the consciousness but the consciousness itself in its highest state—its moral and personal state; and in the conception of nature everything may be abstracted but necessary being, which consciousness recognises as necessary, self-existent, moral, conscious Being; that is, an infinite, self-existent, personal God. Thus it appears that our own *moral will and consciousness* in their mutual action reveal the highest *à priori* essential being of man—*conscience*—acting morally and authoritatively as a judge; for there must be an agent before there can be an act,—a judge before a judgment. And by analysis there must be an *infinite Self*, of whom the human self can be but an image.

We have thus obtained from the region of *à priori* thought and argument some very grand and important truths, which we are entitled to retain and introduce into our subsequent proof, for its completion, at whatever stage of the argument may be found suitable or necessary.

We next proceed to *objective nature*; and we inquire into the evidence which it can afford, if any, of its and our Creator, in the form of what is termed the *à posteriori* argument. In this form of argument we at first abstain from projecting our own being, or the results already obtained from the *à priori* argument, into it, that we may ascertain what it can itself yield. We must, however, apprehend it according to our own *laws of thought*, for we cannot otherwise form, any intelligent apprehension at all. It spreads out before us as a world of sensible and perceptible phenomena; and it may appear at first bewilderingly vast and varied. But we soon begin to perceive that these multitudinous natural phenomena can be arranged and classified; and we are almost surprised to find that there is an astonishing analogy between the modes of classification into which they seem spontaneously to fall, and the modes of classification according to which our own minds act. Whether this may arise from our own laws of thought, unconsciously projected into nature, as our old antagonists the sceptics might suggest, we do not think it yet necessary to inquire, but proceed with quickened interest in our investigation. We observe a regular succession of phenomena so arranged and so uniform in their succession, that the appearance of either suggests the other; and we give to this uniformity the name *causation*, implying, that of any two phenomena seen in this unvarying succession, the one may be designated *cause*, and the other *effect*. This suggests that the connecting link in causation is *power*, or that the former of these phenomena has power to produce the other.

Here, again, arises a great conflict. One class of men vehemently deny that anything can be traced but succession of events. It may be invariable, and it may be special, so that in observed sequences only one can be the invariable antecedent of some one invariable sequent; still they will not admit that the one has power to produce the other, nor even that any such thing as *power* can be proved to exist. Some may be inclined to think this but an idle logomachy. But the sceptic is well aware that if he can set aside the idea of causation in nature, it

will not be possible to bring any argument from nature in proof of a FIRST CAUSE. Let it be well observed that we have already obtained the idea of *cause* in the region of *à priori* thinking, from consciousness, and that we can legitimately introduce it when we please, so that we can set aside the logomachy without refutation, if we think proper. But we are not obliged to do so. It is only the man of some scientific acquirement who ventures to use this objection; for it meets no respect from men of plain and practical reason and action. But the man of science cannot prosecute his scientific investigations without reasoning from cause to effect, and estimating both *quantity* and *quality* in *cause*. He will not, perhaps, use the word *cause*, still less *power*; but he uses the word *force*, or *physical force*, so that he estimates, expresses in mathematical formulæ, and uses in every way as he would an absolute existence. *Physical force*, as the man of science is compelled to use the phrase, is simply *physical power*, as we should use that term, and involves a forced concession, on his part, of all that we need care for with regard to causation in nature. Even the fact that the ultimate *forces* in nature, such as gravitation, electricity, magnetism, etc., are all invisible, yet all capable of being expressed in precise ratios of operation, is entirely on our side of the argument.

With *causation* thus amply proved, we proceed to mark *order*, *adjustment*, and *adaptation*, of all the means, the powers, the forces, the operations in nature,—all so fitted as to produce some definite *end*. But the adaptation of means, so as to produce a definite end, is *design*. We thus arrive at the great and important conception of *design*; and we see on every side, around us and above us, that all nature is pervaded by proofs of design. We see it in the minutest forms of existence that the microscope can reveal, and in the adjustments of the mightiest masses that wheel on their majestic revolutions in the boundless fields of space. We trace it in the finest chemical analysis which that wonderful science can produce; and we mark its adaptations in the inscrutable realm of life, where it works with the highest energy, and produces the most marvellous effects, but where we cannot see it working. The very least conclusion that we can draw from even *objective nature*, *objectively viewed*, is, that it has all been arranged and adjusted, and is pervaded and sustained by a *designing* and *formative*

power, so mighty and so wise, that we can conceive no limits to that power and wisdom.

Here, again, our old antagonist, scepticism, meets us, and seeks to renew the conflict. It will admit that we have proved design and power, but not, necessarily, wisdom. "Might not matter, or atoms, and physical forces, be eternal? might there not have been an unbeginning series of attempts, more or less abortive, made by these forces to produce such arrangements and adaptations as could be permanent? might not some happy 'fortuitous concourse of atoms' have at length cast the frame of nature into its present form? might not, therefore, the whole be thus adequately accounted for, by the single assumption of a designing and formative power in nature, —itself merely a natural, formative, but unintelligent and unconscious power?" This is positivism and fatalism.

But we are not restricted to the region of *objective nature*, in the mere material universe; for *man* is also nature, and can be viewed and reasoned on *objectively*, as self-consciousness manifests him. We tell the sceptic that we are about to introduce the human world into the argument, and thus to combine into one the *à priori* with the *à posteriori* argument, and then to find what the conclusion must be. We assert that this course is perfectly legitimate, even rigidly scientific; for we mean to keep within the *objective* sphere of argument. But let it be observed that this does not exclude the introduction of mind; for though *mind acting* is *subjective*, yet, when it contemplates its own thoughts and conceptions, the thoughts and conceptions become *objective*. We now, therefore, legitimately introduce the world of mind into the investigation, and contemplate man in all his capacities,—as sentient, percipient, intellectual, moral, and, even in faint and dim foreshadowing anticipation, *spiritual and immortal*. Objective nature becomes immediately a scene of intelligible light, and beauty, and wisdom, and power, when objective man is introduced. We had previously acquired the idea of *causation*, by employing our own bodily organization to produce effects. We had also acquired the notion of power, by putting forth our own muscular powers, and perceiving the consequences that resulted. The notion of invariable sequences does not appear strange to us, because we perceive either the invariable sequence of the effect following our own act of power, or the obstruction which pre-

vented it, by the removal of which the proper sequence is produced. Still further, we already understand the idea of design, by our own consciousness of intending to put forth our power for the production of some end in view, and the intended arrangement and adaptation of suitable means for the accomplishment of that end. To all these important elements of knowledge, consciousness bears its indubitable, irresistible testimony, against which no sceptical cavils are of the slightest force.

We have not now the slightest difficulty or doubt in making the proper inferences from the phenomena of nature. Everywhere around us we perceive causation, power, adaptation, and marks of design, and they are all to us perfectly intelligible. In many instances we can distinctly understand the design, and feel great delight in marking the exquisite skill and beauty of the adjusted arrangements; while both admiration and something akin to love spring up in the heart when we perceive the *benevolence* of the design itself,—how much forecasting goodness it manifests, and how much happiness it produces. And all this we can now ascribe to *mind*, to mind alone, and to mind with certainty; for our own consciousness has taught us that design resides in mind, and only in mind. It is not a mere formative power, we are now certain, that constructed and sustains the world, but a wise and benevolent Mind, who framed it in wisdom, according to the design of His goodness, and sustains it by the exercise of the same attributes of wisdom, goodness, and power, and rules it as a personal moral Governor.

But we do not complete our survey of man till we contemplate man in society. A world of new wonders now opens out to view before us. We trace carefully man's mental and moral constitution, so far as our own consciousness reveals to us our common nature. In the primary principles and laws of the human mind, we see innumerable proofs of the infinite wisdom that formed such a creature as man. We see how fitted and adapted he is to the world, and the world to him; and we see also how certainly his constitution is adapted to the construction of a social world, from its germ in the family to its greatest development in the highly cultivated community of a mighty empire. The complicated conditions of society, and the adaptations of the human being both actively to frame

these and passively to comply with them, may almost be termed infinite. The manner, too, in which society is framed to draw forth and cultivate what are thence termed the "social virtues," is another source of very peculiar design and adaptation. These social virtues are all *moral* in their nature; their right performance is accompanied with pleasure in ourselves, and rewarded by the approbation of others; while their neglect or violation is accompanied by a feeling of pain, akin to remorse, and punished by the disapprobation of others. Conscience is ever dealing with them; either our own conscience in our personal feelings, or the general conscience in the moral judgment formed and manifested by society at large.

But this is the bright side of the picture, the sunny side of the prospect. Society is full of contradictions, and man himself is full of similar contradictions. We know the *right* and *good*, and we approve them; but we do the *wrong* and the *evil*. We recognise the benefits of the *social virtues* and applaud them, but we perform them very imperfectly. We censure and condemn their neglect or violation; and yet we live habitually as if their neglect and violation were almost a duty. We praise warmly the precious and disinterested virtue of *self-denial*, and its generous active aspect, benevolent *kindness*; and yet our conduct is largely regulated by narrow-minded selfishness, and the mean vice of self-gratification. We render homage to *justice* as the very guardian of social life; but we practise deceit, fraud, treachery, and injustice of every kind, as if their practice were meritorious. We recognise in *truth* the very cement of confiding friendly intercourse; and both in word and action the conduct of many is embodied falsehood. We are all fully conscious that the right observance of the social virtues would render this world a scene of almost unmingled happiness; but we so live in their habitual violation as to make it a scene of almost incessant misery. It abounds with contradiction, confusion, errors, vices, crimes, degradation, remorse, and dread of impending punishment.

Yet there is no such wild anarchy, or wilder misrule, in *objective physical nature*. Everything holds on its appointed course with calm, undeviating regularity. We war not with the elements, nor the elements with us, but we learn their laws, and rule them to serve us at our will. There is a steady and peaceful harmony in nature, and it acts harmoniously. Not so

with man. He *makes society*, for that is his nature; but he disturbs and embroils society, warring with it and with himself, doing and suffering wrong and violence; and that is at once his aim and his punishment. Nature is fitted to man, and nature's laws obey and benefit him, when he lives and acts in accordance with their design. Society is fitted to man, and man to society; and so fitted as to secure happiness to man virtuous—to man acting according to consciousness and conscience. But the adaptations of nature and its laws act also like inexorable judges and avengers, inflicting unmitigable punishment on him by whom they are violated. And society itself, bearing witness to something in man better than his conduct, is also a judge and an avenger, casting from its bosom, or smiting to death, the man who persists in continued crime. All this conscience asserts to be the inevitable consequence of the evil which it condemns; and reminding man of his proper personality and the inevitable inference of an infinite Personality, the Author of both nature and man, utters with deep and awful whisper, or with loud, stern thunder, the anticipated hereafter and its final judgment. Why is this so? Nature is as it was designed, and all is well. Man's harmony with nature tells him that he is the creature of the same designing Mind. But with him all is not well; he is not answering the design; yet there is enough in him to prove that the design was originally good. God did not then create man as he now is; but he has sustained some great and dire calamity,—has fallen from his original condition; and that fall is the cause of his present confusion and misery.

The sum, then, of what we can conclude from Natural Theology is this, or may be thus stated: That

There must exist a POWER to which we can imagine no limits, either in space, in potence, or in constructive skill; and that this POWER is a MORAL PERSON, the Governor of the universe—ONE GOD.

While all nature obeys His government, and is in order and at peace, it is not so with the social world of man, but all is disorder and misery.

Yet, from the consideration of the moral nature of man, we conclude with certainty, that the Creator of man is an all-perfect, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, eternal, personal God; and that He could not, consistently with His own nature,

create man other than innocent ; that, therefore, man must have fallen from innocence into depravity and guilt.

That inasmuch as perfect justice is not executed in this world, it is probable that man has a future, in which to meet reward or punishment. And since, even in this world, there are desires and restraints, it is also probable that man is at present in a state of *probation*, amidst counterbalancing influences.

But as man feels and experiences that he *cannot* obey the moral law of even his own nature, while he is conscious that it is of absolute obligation, it is impossible for him to achieve a successful probation unaided.

There is, therefore, a GOD of infinite holiness, goodness, righteousness, and justice, as certainly as man himself exists and has a conscience. Man has violated at once the law of his own moral nature and the law of God. Therefore there must be to man *either* endless punishment, or some method of restoration, not arising from himself, but bestowed by God.

But it is *probable*, since probation is allowed and judgment delayed, that God may have provided some means of restoration, which nature cannot indicate more than very darkly ; and *therefore probable* that God has given a *revelation* to mankind.

What *sin* is, or *redemption* may be, Natural Theology does not know, and cannot tell ; it cannot, therefore, suffice for fallen and depraved man, cannot produce a true religion.

The results to which we have been conducted by the course which we have pursued, may be thus stated. So far as we can trace the elements and laws of *being* in *man* and *nature*, they are all good, individually and relatively fitted to secure his own welfare and happiness, and to promote that of all around him, and to glorify his Creator by displaying His wisdom, power, and goodness. This might be the natural religion of man *in innocence*.

But these beneficial results are not produced. Man's sufferings constrain him to perceive that he is in a diseased condition ; that he neither feels nor acts in accordance with nature, and, consequently, cannot enjoy what nature provides and offers. Conscience tells him that the malady under which he suffers is a *moral disease* ; that his own criminal conduct is the cause of his suffering. Natural religion completely ratifies this dread conclusion ; but can neither explain the cause nor pro-

duce a remedy. Over this deplorable result the sad and weary soul may brood, exercising its high faculty of thought, looking before and after. But what avail all its most profound or most elevated musings? If its regards are directed backward and inward, it finds indications of a purity sullied, an innocence lost, a dignity forfeited, an integrity violated, a sense of rectitude aggrieved, and a degradation sustained,—all its pristine and natural glory and happiness darkened and destroyed. If upward and forward it desires to look, there rise upon the soul dim anticipations of, or rather anxious longings after, a higher, holier, and happier state of existence, but darkened and saddened all with the melancholy consciousness of that condition of moral disease from which it cannot rescue itself, and with which true happiness is incompatible. Thus trembling ever between these two conditions, the lost purity and happiness of the past, and the longed-for restoration of the future, the thoughtful spirit can find no repose, no peace, no satisfaction. All around the anxious and inquiring man there is peace, so far as regards external nature; but so far as regards the conduct of his fellow-men, all is anarchy and misery,—anarchy and misery exactly the same as that which tortures his own inner being; and from nothing within himself can he obtain the slightest prospect of deliverance.

But although nature can produce no remedy, and natural religion can neither explain the disease, *sin*, nor provide a remedy, *redemption*; yet there appear to be some suggestions in the evidence of design, and in the delayed execution of judgment, which ought at least to sustain hope, and prompt to inquiry. There are not only compensations throughout nature, conveying some counterbalancing advantage where there is some unavoidable disadvantage, but such other adjustments also as might seem to indicate what might be regarded as a latent prediction of some yet unannounced remedial arrangement. This becomes still more apparent when we direct our attention to the fact, that nature is richly stored with substances possessing medicinal qualities, for the alleviation or removal of disease and the restoration of health. Does not this seem, at least, to suggest that there may be, in God's moral government, the means of providing a remedy for the soul's moral disease, if God would graciously please to reveal it? And when we further contemplate the infinite goodness

which so characterizes the works of God, are we not encouraged to hope, if not even to expect, that God will provide a remedy, and will also so reveal it to man as to place it within his reach, at least in a condition analogous to nature's remedies?

Without ascribing much to such a mode of viewing the subject, it seems to us that there is in it enough to sustain some degree of hope, to prompt to inquiry, and to fix upon man the responsibility of giving his utmost attention to anything that purports to be the revelation of a remedial measure for the healing of his consciously diseased soul, especially when considered along with the merciful fact, that the execution of the deserved sentence is still delayed. No man can be at liberty to neglect this inquiry. Indifference with regard to it is a great aggravation of his crime, and consequently of his moral disease. It is now, and must always be, man's most important duty to ascertain if there be any remedial revelation, and to institute the most earnest and conscientious investigation of its claims to possess that sacred character. Even Natural Theology, by its irresistible conclusions, lays us under an imperative obligation to undertake this urgent duty; and though it cannot conduct us further in the inquiry, it has rendered inestimable service in so far pointing out the path, removing some obstructions, and impelling us to the enterprise.


DIVISION II.

REVELATION: EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL EVIDENCES.

PART I.—EXTERNAL EVIDENCES.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

N commencing our study of Natural Theology, we were at some pains to show that our task was the solution of a problem, not the demonstration of a theorem; that the problem which we had to solve was one already universally believed; and that what we had to do, was to trace the processes of thought which entitle us rationally to hold that belief. The matter of belief, of which we had to give an account, is this: There is in the human mind an intuitive, irresistible, and universal conviction that there exists a Supreme Being—God; and that man himself stands in a relation of dependence, probably of duty, to that Supreme Being. This directly raises the question which forms the basis of all inquiries relative to Natural Theology, viz.: Can human reason, without any higher aid, by means of its own researches and discoveries alone, account for this universal conviction, and answer the great question thereby raised, and thus supersede the necessity of any supernatural revelation? or does the highest achievement of reason accomplish no more than the supplying of a basis for such a revelation, rendering it intelligibly desirable that there should be, and probable that there has been, and still exists, a supernatural revelation?

The general summary of what we have learned from Natural Theology may be thus somewhat systematically stated:—

That there must, and does, exist a Supreme Being, to whom we can imagine no limits, either in space, in power, or in con-

structive skill; and that this Supreme Being is a moral Person, Creator and Governor of the universe.

That while all physical nature obeys His government, and is in order and at peace, it is not so in the moral nature, and in the social world of man; but all is anarchy, disorder, crime, remorse, and misery.

That we can, nevertheless, from the consideration of the moral nature of man, conclude with certainty that the Creator of man is an all-perfect, omnipresent, omniscient, eternal, personal God; and that He could not, consistently with His own nature, create man other than innocent; that, therefore, man must have fallen from innocence into depravity.

That inasmuch as perfect justice is not executed in this world, it is probable that there is a future state for man, in which there shall be a complete retributive condition of rewards and punishments. And since, even in this world, there are desires and restraints, it is also probable that man is in a state of *probation*, placed amidst counterbalancing influences.

But as man feels and experiences that he *cannot* obey the moral laws of even his own nature, while he is conscious that it is of absolute obligation, it is impossible for him to achieve a successful probation unaided; and his own violated *conscience* must be his accuser before God.

This, then, is the dread alternative conclusion to which Natural Theology inevitably leads: As certainly as man knows that he himself exists, and has a conscience, so certainly does he know that there is a GOD of *infinite holiness, goodness, righteousness, and justice*; that man has violated at once the laws of his own moral nature, and the laws of God; and therefore, that there must be to man *either* endless punishment, *or* some method of restoration, not arising from himself, but bestowed by God.

Yet some dim hope may still be entertained; for since probation is allowed and judgment delayed, God *may have* provided some method of restoration, which nature cannot indicate more than very darkly; and therefore it seems probable that God has given to mankind a gracious revelation of some divine remedial means of their salvation.

But what the nature of man's moral malady is,—what moral evil is,—what *sin* is, and how it entered into, corrupted, polluted, and still enslaves the soul of man,—or what *redemp-*

tion may be, Natural Theology does not know, and cannot tell. It cannot, therefore, suffice for fallen and depraved man; it cannot produce a right *religion* for fallen man.

SEC. I. STATEMENT AND DEFENCE OF THE ARGUMENT.

A REVELATION PROBABLE.

We are now in the right position to ask the question which introduces the subject of revelation:—Have we sufficient evidence to prove that a supernatural revelation has actually been given? There has been enough already obtained from Natural Theology to prompt to this inquiry, and to fix upon man the responsibility of giving his utmost attention to anything that purports to be the revelation of a remedial measure for the healing of his consciously diseased soul, especially when considered along with the merciful fact that the execution of the deserved sentence is still delayed. No man can be at liberty to neglect this inquiry. Indifference with regard to it is a great aggravation of his crime, and consequently of his moral disease. It is now, and must always be, man's most imperative duty to endeavour to ascertain whether there be any remedial revelation; and to institute the most earnest and conscientious investigation of its claims to possess that sacred character. And though Natural Theology cannot conduct us further in this urgently important inquiry, it has rendered inestimable service in so far suggesting it, pointing out the path, removing some obstructions, and impelling us to the lofty and holy enterprise.

We may even anticipate, so far, *what* there must be in such a revelation as we need; for Natural Theology has suggested to us some all-important questions which it cannot answer. We need to know the real nature of our sore moral disease,—what moral evil is,—or, in one word, what *sin* is,—how it entered into our nature, corrupted, polluted, and still enslaves, degrades, and ruins the human soul. We have also already learned to know so much of the character of God,—that He is holy, righteous, and just, as well as good,—true, and merciful; but we need to know how it can be consistent with the holy, righteous, and just God, to show mercy to sinners, and yet maintain these attributes in all necessary and infinite perfection. This, viewed even from the human side, is the special

point on which we most need a divine revelation. For while it could not but interest us very deeply to know how it was that sin entered into the human soul, it must interest us far more deeply to know whether there be in the infinite wisdom and goodness of God such a remedial measure as shall at once maintain, in all their infinite and eternal sacredness, the divine attributes to which sin stands in abhorrent contrast, and yet secure the pardon of the sinner, and his restoration to the favour of the just, righteous, and holy God. A divine revelation, therefore, suited to the awful necessities of the case, must of necessity maintain and vindicate God's character in all its infinite holiness, justice, and sovereign majesty, even in and by the provided remedy, before it would be possible for the thoroughly awakened and enlightened conscience to believe that the sinner could be saved.

Can God be just, and yet the justifier of the sinner? is a question to which none but God Himself could ever give a conclusive answer; and yet this is the very question which not only the aroused guilty conscience, but which even Natural Theology, constrains man to ask. It will be seen at once that this is a question which no created reason could possibly answer, because it relates to what lies within the awful depths of the Divine Being's own nature and character. Modern philosophy may boast loudly of its high intuitions; but it cannot, without daring impiety, pretend to see into and fathom the infinity of God's own nature, and tell what is possible with Him. We may see that nothing inconsistent with His own nature is possible with Him, for that would be self-contradictory, and therefore impossible,—an imperfection, and therefore impossible; and we may not be able to see how the pardon of a sinner is consistent with infinite justice, but we are sure that if it can be consistent, God Himself can alone tell us how. No human intuition can avail us here; and, so far as we can mark the inflexibility of nature's laws, and feel the incessant and immitigable agonies of remorse, we are constrained to believe that nothing can save us but the putting forth of some new restorative energy,—some new creative spiritual act by God Himself, from the inexhaustible fulness of His own Eternal Being.

We wish to state this point strongly; because we wish, on the very threshold of our investigation, to meet and set aside

the not less than impious pretensions of the intuitionists. Let it be very closely and earnestly observed, then, that our inquiry, though prompted and urgently impelled by Natural Theology, does not lie within its domain, nor within the domain of *à priori* thinking, nor within the domain of created intelligence, but within the divine nature; and therefore, necessarily and for ever inaccessible, without a direct divine revelation. Let intuition soar as high as it may, it can never transcend the region of *what is*—of created existence and possibilities; it cannot approach *what could be*—what God Himself could think, design, and accomplish. But many of our men of intuition deceive at once themselves and their readers. They begin their upward flight with the light of revelation around them; they ascend by means of its aid to heights which, without it, they could never have even approached; they gaze half blindly on eternal truths which it alone enabled them even dimly to perceive; and then, denying the power that plumed their wing and unscaled their sight, they boast of their discoveries, and assert that to *them*, at least, revelation was not necessary. They stole fire from heaven: let them beware lest it consume them. Again we say, God Himself can alone answer the question, “Can God be just, and yet a justifier of the sinner?” and that answer is revelation; for the answer lies hid in God’s essential nature and character, which He alone can reveal, and no created being can ever by searching find out.

But is it contrary to reason to say that a divine revelation is possible? Surely no one who believes that there is a God, and that He is a Being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, can reasonably deny that He can, if it seem good to Him, make a revelation of Himself and of His will to men, in an extraordinary way, different from the discoveries made by men themselves, in the natural and ordinary use of their own rational faculties and powers. Not many years ago this statement would not have been thought to require any proof. But in our age men have become bolder, or, rather, more audacious, in their opposition to everything that tends to support revealed truth. Some assert at once that no supernatural communication from God is possible, because the very idea of the supernatural, say they, eats away the possibility of any conceivable medium of communication between God and man. Has God, then, so locked Himself *behind* nature, and man *in* nature, that

HE cannot open any new way of communication with man because of that tremendous thing, nature, which interposes between the Creator and the creature? Why, this is to imagine nature more potent to hide God than God can be to reveal Himself. "But if He did," say they, "that would be a miracle; and no miracle is possible." Why? "Because it is a violation of the laws of nature, which are invariable." This is the objection, and we shall examine its value after a little: meantime, its very statement, as we have drawn it forth, shows that it is not very formidable.

But another class of objectors assert, on what they deem philosophic grounds, that no external evidence, or what they call *objective* proof, of whatever kind, can be either sufficient, or even relevant, to establish a *subjective* belief in the mind. Every subjective belief, say they, must have evidence of its own kind, on which alone it can be established. It might, perhaps, seem as if this argument were meant to maintain the paramount importance of the internal evidences of Christianity; but such is not the purpose for which it is employed by this class of persons. They hold that there is in the mind a native faculty of spiritual discernment, whose high prerogative it is to judge all evidence and argument of an internal nature, and to receive such only as approves itself to the lofty authority of that high faculty. This is to make the value of the internal evidence to depend, not on the fact of its being a communication from God, but on its being approved by the mind's own internal power of judgment; and in this we trace another instance of the power and deception of the prevalent and boastful subjective philosophy, the great aim of which seems to be the destruction of all belief in every kind of objective truth. The final result of this kind of philosophizing would be an inevitable plunge into the abyss of idealistic pantheism.

Let us, however, examine the objection itself. Stated in its most compressed form, it is this: that no *objective proof* is relevant to establish a *subjective belief*;—not even relevant, that is, has not the necessary relation in kind; and therefore the argument drawn from the one kind of being or knowledge cannot relate to, or pass into, the province of the other. But is this metaphysically true? Have not the most acute modern metaphysicians arrived, in their last analysis, at the conviction that there is a twofold co-efficient in all human knowledge,

which they term *subject-plus-object*? So essentially true do they hold this to be, that they deny the existence of any knowledge that is not thus constituted, and assert that each of the single terms in this compound term is essentially necessary to the other, and equally so—that the *object* is just as necessary to the *subject*, as the *subject* is to the *object*. *This, limited to created mind, especially to the embodied human mind, we believe to be true.* But if so, it entirely removes the objection under consideration; for it proves that the objective is essentially related to the subjective, and that whatever belongs to the one department must have relevancy to the other, in all our knowledge. Or, to descend to more common ground, is it true in fact? Do we not believe innumerable things of which we have no other kind of evidence but objective? Are not all the physical facts relative to the human body, objective in their nature, and yet capable of establishing subjective belief? All our knowledge of physical laws is founded on objective proof, and yet that knowledge furnishes a large amount of our subjective belief. The truth is, we would be inclined to regard the objection itself as nothing more than a specimen of ingenious trifling, if it were not that the consequences to which it leads betray its deeper design. That design manifestly is, to place all belief within and under the government of the individual mind, so that every man may believe or disbelieve according to his own pleasure.

There is in this objection the apparently plausible complaint, that those who produce external argument or evidence are attempting to invade the native freedom of the mind, which must be supreme within its own province. But does this supremacy necessarily imply any such disjunction from the objective world, and its facts and evidences, as that these cannot produce a subjective belief? That supremacy may be shown as clearly in sifting the evidence, as in rejecting it; and when the evidence is satisfactory, the belief of its testimony is not an abdication of its supremacy, or an abandonment of its liberty, by the mind. The human mind shows its high nature and wonderful constitution, when it takes equal and full cognisance of both the elements that compose the human being, and applies them as the Creator manifestly designed, in constituting man the synthesis of mind and matter. Man, this composite creature, takes cognisance of the states and

laws of his own subjective being, and uses intelligently this kind of knowledge in observing, exploring, and using the external world of objective being. And equally legitimate is it for him to take cognisance of the external and objective world, its phenomena and their laws, and to treasure up the result in his own inner world of subjective belief. The abnegation of either of these high and legitimate functions would be the suicidal extinction of half his nature, and would consign to oblivion one half of his knowledge. But it would also be a wilful act of rebellion against his Creator, or, rather, an indication that he is already in that state of rebellion, and is only attempting to devise a feeble vindication of that rebellious condition. What gives certainty to this conclusion is, that those who use it do so only in the case of revelation, and not in other cases where objective proof is employed to establish subjective belief. If they were to use it in all such cases, it would end in absolute scepticism; and they do not wish to be sceptics in any other region than in that of religion.

But there is yet another answer to their objection. They cannot deny that they possess a moral nature—a moral faculty in their inner subjective being. As little is it possible for them to deny, that in the objective world of other men—the social world which is objective to every individual man—they do receive objective proof sufficient and also relevant to establish subjective belief. Their objection is therefore inconsistent with the facts, the laws, and the operations of their own minds, and must be rejected as an invalid and absurd objection. We set aside, then, the objection, “that a revelation is not possible, because no objective proof is relevant to establish a subjective belief.”

We have also characterized this objection as an attempt to bring all belief under the government of subjectivity; and this might suggest a view considerably different from that which we have been examining. It might suggest that this objection was raised, not so much by the subjective philosophy, as by the mystical or fanatical element by which some minds are characterized. It might indeed so arise; and, arising in the present age, it would not be strange that it should use the language of modern philosophy, so far as to give plausibility to its argument. The student of Church History must be sufficiently acquainted with the pretensions which have been

made by mystics and fanatics in every age, claiming a personal and divine spiritual illumination, which rendered them not only independent of anything of such a terrestrial nature as external evidences, but independent of even the Gospel record itself. This view, however, comes more properly within the scope of our consideration when we come to deal with the subject of inspiration; and we shall reserve it till then. It is enough at present to direct attention to the fact, that those who use the above objection mystically are nevertheless, by their own mode of statement, believers in a certain kind of supernatural revelation, and to that extent are not among the assailants of our present position.

When we state directly that a divine revelation is possible, we might almost expect that such a statement would be received at once as an axiomatic and self-evident truth. The objections which we have been considering, however, seem at least to cast doubt on its character as self-evident. We have thought it right to examine the objections; but we do not admit that the statement has not truly the character of being self-evident, if rightly apprehended by a candid and sincere mind. Let us think solemnly and profoundly what is meant when we use the holy name, GOD. We think of a Being infinite in all His attributes,—omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent. We think of Him as the Creator and Governor of man. Can we, when we thus think, entertain any doubt whether it be possible for Him to communicate to His rational creature, man, some knowledge of Himself, of His character, and of His laws and will? We cannot, thus thinking, rationally entertain any such doubt. We feel that He has already endowed our mind with the capacity of apprehending the great and glorious idea of GOD—an idea the very apprehending of which is itself a proof that He has communicated already to the human mind the first element of some knowledge of Himself, and in that communication has elevated it, and given a capacity and a desire for more of that divine knowledge and communion. He who has deeply and solemnly pondered upon these great thoughts will never dispute the possibility of other and higher revelation, but will rather almost expect it, will certainly long for it, and will be ready to give the utmost attention to whatever claims to be a revelation from God.

Our previous study of Natural Theology has led us even

beyond this point, that a supernatural revelation is *possible*, for it has shown us that such a revelation is *probable*. We do not use this word in its strictly etymological sense, as meaning merely, *capable of proof*. We use it to mean, *what is likely to be—what may be expected*. And when we reflect on the course of reasoning which we have pursued, and the pregnant thoughts with which we have been conversant, we can arrive at no other conclusion. We have found that the mind intuitively aspires to the region of *à priori thinking*, and restlessly endeavours to ascend into that lofty sphere; that it cannot be satisfied with any present fact or present thought, but asks what was before it, what caused it, what was prior in existence and in power, what was the absolute first, uncaused, eternal. Is it not *likely*, is it not *to be expected*, that God, who gave to the mind of His rational creature, man, capacities and desires so high, so fitted to glorify and enjoy the Creator, will give him also such further and higher knowledge of Himself as shall secure the *end* to which these very capacities and desires seem to point, as the means *designed* by the Creator in calling man into existence?

We have also found that the mind of man inhabits and informs a sensational and percipient body in wonderful harmony with the external world, nay, with the whole universe,—enabling him not only to walk abroad among scenes of outward grandeur and beauty, surrounded by innumerable wonders and delights, and to apprehend their nature and meaning, reading in their lavish bounty and marvellous adaptations the goodness and the wisdom of their Creator, who in this harmony is perceived to be also His own Creator, the one God, but also to look up to the vast, high, boundless heavens, to gaze with strong eye on their great glory, to trace with expanding and brightening intelligence the adjustments and the laws that regulate the positions and the cyclical movements of these countless suns and systems, and, in their sublimely calm and majestic obedience to the divine power that created and rules them, to read the handwriting of God's eternal power and glory. When we find that such is the nature, such the capacity, and such the tendency of man, this marvellous synthesis of mind and matter, holding in both departments converse with the Creator, can we refrain from hoping, desiring, and expecting some still higher and brighter revelations from the same God, the Creator of man and the universe?

And, still further, we have found, that in the moral faculty of the human soul, and in the moral world of human society, there resides the great and awful power of perceiving the distinction between good and evil, right and wrong; that this moral faculty claims the prerogative of absolute sovereignty over the will and actions of man, asserting its high authority by inflicting the dread penalty of remorse on every one who violates its law and rejects its authority—inflicting on even society at large, on whole communities and nations, the punishments of degradation and misery, of disgrace and ruin, when its commands are disobeyed; and that yet this great and awful, this grave and inexorable faculty, is almost universally disregarded, its authority set aside, its sovereignty disowned, and even its direct appeals to God apparently defied, in the midst of the anarchy, the degradation, the misery, and the madness of this wild moral mutiny and revolt of criminal and wretched human nature, while the dread of a future state of retribution clings to the guilty conscience, and whispers in its profoundest depths, “There is a righteous and just God, and a day of judgment.”

All these solemn and awful truths we have already learned from Natural Theology, with the gentle blending of that element of hope, that since the execution of the sentence is delayed, man may still humbly venture to expect that the just, yet merciful, Judge will reveal a divine remedial measure, whereby His glory even in man shall be signally manifested, and man’s highest capacities of happiness eternally secured, by his restoration to holiness, and to the favour and enjoyment of God.

SEC. II. FURTHER ARGUMENT THAT A REVELATION IS PROBABLE, FROM THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN MIND.

The study of Natural Theology enabled us, legitimately as we think, to believe that a supernatural revelation is not only *possible*, but also *probable*,—to be hoped for, expected, and most earnestly to be desired. We accept the conclusion, feeling it all the more our urgent and imperative duty to inquire “whether there be sufficient evidence that such a revelation has been given, and still actually exists.” But we may trace a different course of proving the *probability of, and necessity for*, a divine revelation, both because there is no reason why

we should limit ourselves to one course of proof, and because some may be impressed more deeply by the *one* than by the *other*, and also because a more common and obvious line of proof may be useful to those who may have to deal with people who could not fully apprehend any argument drawn from Natural Theology, and might even distrust it.

If we have already an adequate knowledge of the human mind and its emotions, desires, and thoughts, we may regard ourselves at liberty to conceive of man in his most simple condition and nature. Conceive, then, the idea of the *first man*. He is as yet alone in the world, and destitute of all the kinds of knowledge which men learn by experience. He is in a state of innocence, with his mental and moral being undarkened by the slightest shade of evil, and unbiassed by the mists of prejudice. His sensations are all in finest harmony with the paradise around him, and the cloudless heavens above him. He is in the very state and condition to receive, with most exquisite precision, all the intimations of itself which external nature pours into his entire sentient being at every receptive pore and thrilling nerve. How rapidly must his quick sensations and truly corresponding perceptions make him acquainted with all external nature, which owns him for its lord! He is necessarily at first what we would call *ignorant as a new-born child*, as well as *innocent*; but his powers and faculties are all mature, and only want exercise, of which he is maturely capable. In such a state we may call him ignorant, if we cautiously guard the term from even seeming to convey an offensive or disparaging meaning; but we cannot call him degraded, or a barbarian—we cannot call his state a savage state,—for there is no moral evil in him to degrade him, and he is not constrained to struggle with physical necessity as the savage is.

Can you suppose, that in such a state, with his whole sentient, and percipient, and intelligent being, joyously drinking in the knowledge of beautiful and benignant nature, there would not arise in his mind the thought of something higher, and the desire to know that higher? He could not but feel that his own existence was new, and that he did not give that existence to himself. He could not but perceive differences in existent things around him—in plants and animals, and at the same time perceive that he was himself higher in nature than all else to which his inquiring attention was directed. This

inevitable perception could not fail to quicken his desire to know whether there did not exist some wise, powerful, and benignant Being, who could explain to him all the wondrous mysteries of his own and nature's existence. And can you suppose that the infinitely benevolent Creator, whose works were so fitted to teach those lower truths which man was so admirably constructed to acquire and know, would refrain from teaching him those higher truths which the highly endowed human mind was at once so eager to learn, and so qualified to receive? There had been given to him, in lavish profusion, everything necessary and beneficial to his *sentient nature*, and everything necessary and beneficial to elicit and instruct his *intellectual nature*. Physical nature around him, and in harmony with him, amounted to little short of a *revelation*, in the indications which it gave of power, wisdom, and goodness, existing in something from which physical nature itself must have derived, at least, order, and organization, and life—yet only a physical revelation. But his high mental and moral being—his *self-conscious soul*—might itself be regarded as something *supernatural*, requiring for its true welfare supernatural communication, and finding no harmony with that, its highest requirement, in anything merely physical. In this condition, it seems impossible to doubt, that very soon after his conscious existence there must have been given to man a *supernatural revelation*, so necessary and beneficial to his moral and spiritual being. To doubt this, would seem equivalent to doubting the very goodness of God, which yet everything else in the world displayed. To doubt this, would seem equivalent to such an admission as that in one department, and that the most important, there was a blank—an incompleted part—in God's creation,—a portion where there should have been the grandest harmony, but in which there was only a dead and irresponsive silence. We hold it certain, therefore, that from perhaps the first hour—undoubtedly from the first day—of the first man's existence, there was given to him a *supernatural revelation*, teaching him to know, love, and adore his Creator and God.

This idea, which we have stated at some length, because it may be disputed, but cannot rationally be denied, is full of the most important consequences. It does not claim for the first man any kind or degree of supernatural endowment, not natu-

ral to man as man, separating that first man from his descendants and their sympathies; on the contrary, it implies and maintains their identity of nature. This view cuts off the very first root of the Romish theory relative to sin, in which all their other apostasies have their origin, and from which they derive all their plausibility and seeming strength. For as they maintain that Adam, by the first sin and the fall, lost nothing but a certain supernatural grace, not essential to true human nature, which had been bestowed on him, he, and by consequence all his descendants, remained still in a condition of sufficient ability to keep God's commandments, and so to secure eternal welfare by their own works. From this follows the theory, that the death of Christ removes the guilt of the fall from all the baptized, who by baptism are regenerated, restored to the sinless state of man before the fall, wanting only the supernatural grace; and that all such may, by their own good works, accomplish their own salvation. We cannot here trace out all the consequences of this primordial Romish fallacy; but we think it of importance to notice its position and its nature.

Further, this idea, that the first man must have had in his earliest state of existence, while still innocent, a supernatural revelation, accounts for all the ancient traditions of man's original intercourse with the gods, with which all ancient mythology abounds. We cannot trace back any ancient heathen religious system, or even historical tradition, without finding ourselves brought into the hazy regions of Cosmogonies, and even Theogonies, and Anthropogonies, in which man is represented as in a state of innocence, of happiness, and of intercourse with the ancient divinities. The poets luxuriate in their descriptions of this primitive *golden age*. The philosophers deplore the loss of the primitive ideas and clear knowledge of that happy period. The sages and legislators conceive of it as the time of true law and right obedience, and peaceful social life; and either seek in it the ideal home of their ideally pure and happy social system, or seek from the gods an instructor for the restoration of such laws and such a state. Numa must have instruction from the nymph Egeria, that he may frame laws for Rome. Minos, Lycurgus, and Solon obtain similar, though, in the case of the two latter, somewhat less direct, assistance, in order to give laws to Crete, Sparta, and Athens.

Plato must place the scene of his republic in the lost great island of Atlantis; and Sir Thomas More has to construct and legislate for his own Utopia; while another philosopher finds the abode of primitive innocence and equal laws in some unknown region of central Africa.

I need not spend time in tracing the fabulous legends of the Hindu mythology, or even of their human legislator Menu; or those of China, and their great sage Confucius; or those of the Scandinavian nations, and their hero, semi-god, and lawgiver, Odin;—still less those of remoter and more benighted nations and tribes, such as the Peruvians and the South Sea Islanders. But let this be distinctly noted, that in every nation and tribe of the human race, where there is intelligence enough to apprehend and retain ancient tradition, there is found the traditionary belief, that man originally enjoyed a happier state, and in it held intercourse with the gods; that is, throwing aside the fabulous garb of tradition, *that man, in his primitive condition, was in the enjoyment of a supernatural revelation.* The only question, then, is, “Can this be accounted for except by the admission, that in the earliest state and stage of his existence a supernatural revelation was actually given to man, and the knowledge of that primordial fact transmitted to, and retained by, all his descendants?” We are fully convinced that it cannot be otherwise accounted for; and therefore, as for other reasons we think it likely, or rather necessary, that such a revelation *would be* given, so, by this line of reasoning, we think it actually proved that it *was given*, although it has been dimmed and partly lost.

Again, by assuming and prosecuting a somewhat different line of investigation, a correspondingly different but corroborative aspect of that primitive truth and principle may be shown. A primitive revelation, we have said, was actually given to primitive man, although it has been dimmed and partially lost. Of this great loss the human mind seems to be *partially conscious*; and to have also a kind of intuitive conviction that the loss will be recovered, or remedied, by the bestowment of another,—perhaps a more full and perfect supernatural revelation. This intuitive conviction, or, at the least, *expectation*, has been entertained in all ages and in all countries,—and that, too, alike by the wisest philosophers, and by the common mind. A few of the statements of the most eminent philosophers

may be quoted in illustration of this. Let us take the first from Socrates, as given in the second Alcibiades: "It seems but to maintain a tranquil expectation; indeed it is absolutely necessary for us to wait until we learn how we ought to conduct ourselves both towards God, and towards men. When will that time come? And who is that teacher? for methinks I would gladly see this person who he is. From the eye of your mind must first be taken away that mist which now bedims it; then indeed will you be able to discriminate as you desire between good and evil. That time will come at no distant date, if it be the pleasure of the gods." In the *Phaedo* we find the following wise yet melancholy sentiment expressed: "We ought therefore by all means to do one of these things, —either to learn or find out in what manner essential truth exists; or, if that be impossible, taking the best and least impeachable of human reasonings, embark on that, as on a frail skiff, and so navigate the perilous ocean of life; unless, indeed, one could perform that voyage less exposed to difficulties and dangers, by means of some safer conveyance, such as a divine revelation would be." In the *Timæus*, Plato says: "It is a difficult matter to find out the Maker and Parent of the universe; and when you have found Him out, to declare Him to all is impossible." Perhaps the most remarkable passage in all the writings of the Greek philosophers is that in which Plato describes the imagined character of a just and virtuous person, supposes the trials he would have to undergo in proof of his sincerity, and states the result. "Taking, then, this (unjust) person thus described, let us place beside him in our reason, a just person, a man of simple yet generous character, exposed to contumely, and desirous rather to be good than to seem so. His good character, however, must be taken away; because, if he have the reputation of being a just person, he may obtain honours and rewards on that account, and then it will not be clear that he cultivates virtue for its own sake, or not for its honours and rewards. He must be stript, therefore, of everything, except his integrity; and being regarded as prone to injustice, while his actions are guiltless, he shall bear the stigma of extreme wickedness. Thus he shall be severely tried for proof of his righteousness, unshaken by opprobrium and all its consequences, but remaining immovable till death. Finally, calumniated throughout a life of probity, this just

person, thus situated, shall be scourged, tortured, bound, deprived of his eyes, and at length, having suffered all manner of cruel treatment, he shall be crucified."

Too much has undoubtedly been made of this remarkable passage, when it was represented, as it has been, as almost a prophecy of our Lord; for it is obvious that Plato's intention was merely to delineate the most disinterested virtue bearing unshaken the severest trials. The very supposition, however, that in this world the most perfect innocence might be exposed to the greatest sufferings, is of some value, as containing at least a tacit admission, that this life is a period of probation, and the world in general a scene of injustice and wickedness. We thus obtain, both expressly and by implication, from the chief Grecian philosophers, a full acknowledgment of the necessity and the value of a divine revelation,—even the expectation that it would be granted,—to teach blind and guilty man his duty to himself, to his neighbour, and to his God.

Similar and closely corresponding passages might be extracted from the writings of Cicero, of Seneca, and of other Roman philosophers; but as Roman philosophy was in a great measure the repetition, almost the translation, of that of Greece, it does not appear necessary to do so. From the whole, however, it is perfectly obvious, that the wisest and the best of the philosophers of both Greece and Rome not only held that a divine revelation had originally been given to man, but also entertained the hope that another revelation would yet be given, both to dispel the darkening mists of uncertainty that had gathered over the past, and to give a clearer light than had been afforded, even by the earliest. This intuitive expectation was strongly upheld by the fact, that the human mind, by its philosophical pursuits, was at one and the same time becoming able, both to refute many of its ancient errors and prevailing superstitions, and to apprehend more clearly a clearer revelation, if such should be granted. These philosophers continued to regard it as their duty to conform externally to the observances of their national religion, which nevertheless they despised; because, while they felt that some religion was necessary, they felt also that they were utterly unable to make any religion that could deserve to be received. They continued their polytheism, or worship of many gods, while they were convinced that there could be only *one God*; but, like Plato,

admitted the difficulty of discovering that one God, and the impossibility of conveying clearly and authoritatively the knowledge of that discovery to others. They felt that a gross and grovelling superstition had assumed the position due to true religion; but they did not dare openly to assail that superstition, lest they should become its victims; and they were not in possession of any such true religion as renders men willing and able to become martyrs.

The common mind entertained a similar expectation, but manifested it in a different manner. How was it, we may ask, that pretenders to the possession of some revelation have been so readily believed and so eagerly followed, in the early ages, and in every age? We have already remarked, that when the great legislators, who really wished to institute as good laws as the people could receive, promulgated these laws, they invariably laid claim to supernatural instruction. This claim, as we have seen, was founded on the universally believed tradition, that the gods had held intercourse with mankind in primitive times, and communicated to them the knowledge of good laws and useful arts; and that this tradition had for its basis the literal truth of the first revelation to the first man. In like manner, when any cunning impostor wished to introduce some new religion, or religious ceremony, or new superstitious mode of worship, he always asserted that he had been honoured by some private communication with some deity, and been thus taught to introduce this new ritual observance, or new deity. But why were people so ready to believe these assertions? Because they already believed that their gods had, in the earliest ages, held similar converse with men, and given to them their religious tenets and forms of worship. In this traditionary belief all impostors, in all ages and countries, have found an element on which they could venture to rest their imposture, and by the influence of which they were enabled to obtain a superstitious evidence. The early heathen geographer Strabo, after recording the supposed intercourse between mankind and their gods, which he had found to be a universal belief, says: "Whatever becomes of the real truth of these relations, this, however, is certain, that men did believe and think them true; and for this reason prophets were held in such honour, as to be thought worthy sometimes of royal dignity, as being persons who delivered precepts and admonitions from

the gods, both while they lived, and after their death. Such," adds he, "were Tiresias and Amphioraus—such were Moses and his successors." This language of Strabo at least proves the prevalence of the belief, and the kind of respect rendered to those who were thought to have been honoured by these divine communications. But while it thus accounts both for the ready credence yielded to these pretenders, and explains the reason why they ventured to make such claims, it confirms also our argument, that such a tradition, so universally held, must have arisen from the actual fact of primitive revelation.

The debasement of this primitive fact and early tradition, by its transmission in a continually increasing vagueness of statements and rudeness of aspect and expression through the successive stages of an increasing barbarism among remote and wandering hordes, will also account for nearly all of the kinds of incantations, charms, magic spells, witchcrafts, fetiches, and such like dark superstitions as are found among savage tribes, or among the less civilised corners in which thick ignorance still broods, even in our own land. We are still shocked from time to time by accounts not only of the rude and wild beliefs of savage tribes in the centre of Africa, in the backwoods of America, among the Chinese, Tartars, Siberians, devil-worshippers in Kurdistan, and the inhabitants of newly discovered islands, but also of strangely dark and absurd superstitions still held by some of our own countrymen, over whose minds the thick clouds of ignorance and superstition still hang in undiminished density. All these we regard as instances of degradation, not of invention. They are the wild and absurd forms which a misunderstood truth can assume, when it is unintelligently received into an ignorant mind. In an early and simple age mankind may have little culture of the mere intellect, but great power of imagination and emotion. They will express their quick and strong emotions in warm, glowing, metaphorical language. But as the emotions become less and less powerful under the pressure of physical necessity, the metaphors become, as it were, condensed into absolute realities, and men begin to believe the hardened figure. Thus religion can become idolatry. Thus the belief of the universal presence and power of God in nature can become nature-worship, or, when refined by a false philosophy, can become materialistic pantheism. Thus idolatry and the worship of nature combined and degraded can become the

worship of brutes, as in ancient Egypt; or fetichism, as among some African tribes. Thus belief in the efficacy of prayer can be degraded into belief in the power of incantations, spells, and charms, when darkly held by the rude grasp of malignant and vindictive ignorance.

But we need not prosecute this line of investigation further. The main object we have had in view throughout these observations, has been to show, first, that the calmest and most rational conception we can form of the nature and condition of the first man constrains us to believe that he must have received, and did actually receive, a divine revelation. This appears in the capacity and the tendency of his own nature, on the ground that it was such as ours, only without such knowledge as we learn from experience, and also without such prejudices and mental tendencies to error as now darken our perceptions, pervert our experience, prevent the formation of candid and honest judgments, and leave us often dark in the midst of surrounding light, because we love the darkness. Still more evidently does this appear to be the necessarily true view of the first man when we think of the character of God, and the gracious benevolence which pervades all His conduct towards man. It is impossible to believe that God, who established a harmony so wonderfully perfect between sentient and percipient man and external nature, and enabled man to apprehend, realize, and enjoy this harmony and adaptation,—and who has endowed man with the still higher faculties belonging to a rational and moral spirit, with the capacity inherent in this endowment of being the image of his Creator, or of apprehending in some measure the character, and entering into and enjoying the spiritual elevation and happiness of communion with God;—it is impossible to believe that God, who made this intercourse the highest happiness of man, and gave him the holy desire for it, would withhold such a revelation of Himself as was necessary to enable man actually to obtain and enjoy that happiness.

It has been shown also, by a sufficiently wide induction, that there exists throughout all the world, and has always existed from the most remote antiquity, the traditionary belief that primitive man was originally in a state of innocence and happiness; that in that state and period he enjoyed frequent intercourse with the Deity; that by means of this intercourse he obtained the knowledge of wise and equitable laws and

useful arts; that from the same source he received religious truth and the institutions of religious worship; and that in every attempt to reform mankind, either by improved legislation or by improved religion, recourse must again be had to converse with the Deity. And it has been argued that the absolutely universal prevalence of these beliefs, or of their perversions, abuses, and corruptions, can be accounted for on no other ground than the actual fact of a primitive revelation—so primitive that it began with the first man, and necessarily became known to all his descendants. This is so perfectly coincident with what Natural Theology led us to expect—with what man's constitution impels him intuitively to expect—with all that he has always believed,—that we feel warranted to hold it as an incontestable proof of a primitive divine revelation. On all these grounds, and on many corroborative proofs which might be stated, we think the subject has been brought to as complete a proof as ought to be either expected or desired, in a question of a moral and historical character, where demonstration is, from the nature of the case, impossible; and, without further argument, we feel warranted in asserting, that we have shown a supernatural and divine revelation to be not only *possible*, but also *probable*, to be expected, and to *have been already given*, at least to this extent, that there are many incontestable facts in human history which would have been impossible had there not been such a revelation.

SEC. III. THE NECESSITY OF A DIVINE REVELATION.

In the two preceding sections we have shown that a divine revelation was both *possible* and *probable*, partly by conclusions to which we were led by Natural Theology, and partly by the nature of man, and partly by the remains of ancient and universal tradition, which can be adequately accounted for only by the admission that a divine revelation must actually have been given to the first man. But there is still one additional preliminary point to which we must direct some attention, namely, the *necessity* of such a revelation. The reason why this point seems to deserve separate consideration, is our desire to meet every human requirement, and answer every fair and reasonable question,—even those questions that scarcely deserve to be called fair and reasonable. A somewhat captious opponent

might say, "You have no doubt proved a divine revelation to be *possible*, or even *probable*, that is, *likely*, or to be *expected*, by the arguments of Natural Theology; and you have given a very plausible explanation of the condition of the *first man*, and the universal tradition of primitive intercourse with the gods, by the hypothesis of an actual primitive supernatural revelation: but let me recall your attention to your own argument. So far as that argument is convincing, it seems to me, that it goes near to prove, that a supernatural revelation is not, after all, so *necessary* as you assert, since Natural Theology can furnish so much information concerning an infinite, eternal, and personal God."

Such an objection we might term somewhat captious, and somewhat unfair; but we think it right to meet it fairly. It is somewhat captious and unfair, because it takes only a partial view of the deductions from Natural Theology, and uses that partial view, not only as if it were the whole, but for the purpose of setting aside the rest. It takes the information which Natural Theology gives concerning the necessary existence of one infinite, eternal, and personal God; but it leaves unnoticed the not less clear information, that man has violated the law of his own moral nature and of moral obligation and duty to God, and that, as all human social life shows, he must be amenable to righteous law and inflexible justice, manifested in all the moral government of the world. It leaves unnoticed also the faint yet gracious indications of a possible remedial measure, still to be revealed and introduced into this state of probation, which have awakened, and keep alive a dim and trembling hope of, and anxious desire for, a *supernatural revelation*. We might regard this full statement of the inferences drawn from the region of Natural Theology, as enough to set aside the somewhat captious and unfair objection which we have mentioned; but we think it more satisfactory to meet it by *direct proofs* of the *necessity* of a supernatural and divine revelation.

We have already directed attention to the existence of an ancient and universal tradition, implying a primitive revelation; but we now turn to the fact, that this tradition had become so obscure as to do little more than prompt men to inquiry respecting the existence and the character of God, but gave them little aid in the inquiry. If, then, the results of that inquiry have in all ages and countries been unsatisfactory, the *necessity* of a further revelation will appear. Natural Theology, as we

have seen, is a necessity of man's nature. It appears to be impossible for man to refrain from asking such questions as, "What am I? Whence came I? How came I to be, and to be here? What is the first cause of this intelligible universe and my intelligent self?" Such questions must have forced themselves on the mind of the first man, as they have forced themselves on the mind of man in all ages. To some of them Natural Theology can give answers more or less satisfactory, as we have seen. But while we may readily believe that the Natural Theology of the first man must have been far more satisfactory to *him* than *ours* can be to *us*, undimmed as his mind was by sin, and undarkened by prejudice; yet even in his case, while it could tell him of an infinite, eternal, and personal God, whom it was his highest duty to love, honour, obey, and adore, yet it could not tell him anything about a rule of obedience, and it could not tell him how to worship. It follows that, even to the first man, Natural Theology could not furnish a religion; and that therefore, even to him, a *revelation* was necessary.

But when *sin* entered into his soul, it rendered a further revelation necessary, to suit his altered condition, to give a stronger light, and to give information of a deliverance and a Deliverer. This revelation, however, had now a difficulty to encounter, greater than at first. It had to pierce the darkness, dispel the fears, and overcome the prejudices of moral guilt; and this required that the soul should be made ready, humbly to acknowledge that guilt, and submit to the truths and requirements of this new revelation. The *first* revelation would naturally tell man of his Creator and God, prescribe the method of worship, and appoint a test of obedience, clear, simple, and easy. The *second* revelation would as naturally remind man of his guilt, and appoint a symbol of the predicted deliverance and Deliverer; but in this there must needs always be, on the part of man, the humbling acknowledgment of his sin, and of his need of a Saviour. But as the first sin was of the nature of a proud attempt to rise into an equality with, or at least independence of, God; the stain,—the very nature of its guilt, would render man extremely unwilling to make any such humiliating acknowledgment: consequently we might expect to find man cleaving to the *first* revelation, and rejecting the *second*. Now this is exactly what took place in the recorded case of Cain and

Abel. For Cain clung to Natural Theology, and to such homage of the fruits of the earth under his culture, as implied an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God, but declined to present the symbol of expiation, which was an acknowledgment of sin; while Abel, rendering humbly that symbol, acknowledged sin, and expressed trust in a promised Saviour. This remarkable event foreshadowed the great distinction about to take place between the natural man and the believer; and it explains why man is still so prone to trust in his own works,—in Natural Theology, or, rather, in natural religion and the first revelation, and its covenant of works,—because his natural inclination is prone to adhere to his natural primary position, and his pride renders him unwilling to acknowledge its loss by the fall.

This may perhaps be deemed somewhat of a divergence from a strictly scientific course, since we have drawn an illustration from the Bible before we have proved its divine origin and truthful information. It points out, however, a principle embodied in a fact very clearly; and we proceed to point out the same principle embodied in other facts, with which we are furnished by the history of the world. Nothing can be more certain than that mankind have manifested in every age and nation their unwillingness to admit the idea of *sin*, and of their own *depravity* and *need of a Saviour*. Even the sacrificial institution, while it seems to acknowledge sin and the need of some *propitiation*, has been almost universally misunderstood and perverted, not only by heathen nations, but even by the Hebrews, until its true moral signification was lost; and ceasing to be regarded as a symbol, it came to be viewed as the cruel satisfaction enacted by an angry and cruel deity. If they had entertained any clear idea of sin, as *moral evil*, they must have seen that no sacrifice could remove guilt so long as they continued in the perpetration of moral evil; and that the violent and compulsory death of an animal, neither rational nor moral, could not possibly expiate the guilt of a rational and moral being, though it might symbolize and predict some future adequate expiation.

Nothing can be more crude, confused, imperfect, and dark, than the ideas of all ancient nations regarding the nature of God,—the Hebrews only excepted. It is not necessary to dwell at any great length on this topic. We might tran-

scribe the Theogonies of Greek philosophers, antiquarians, and poets, and tell of Nox and Erebus, and Ouranos, and Saturn, and the Titans, and Jove; or we might record the Orphic legends; or we might produce the dark Phœnician fables of Sanchoniatho; or we might trace some portion of Egypt's hoar ideas of Kueph, Khem, and Phre, their mythic Triads of the great powers of nature; or we might investigate the corresponding Hindu Triad of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; or we might direct attention to the illusive theory of Buddh in India and China; or we might turn to the Zabaism of the ancient Arian or Iranian nations, and its modification by Zoroaster, or Zardusht, with its twin eternal, Ormuzd and Ahriman, light and darkness, the source of the later Gnostic and Manichæan theories. But such a survey might be little more than an idle parade of curious lore; and the only conclusion to which it could lead, would be, that man, either without a revelation, or turning away from the revelation which had been given, cannot form any true notion of the one only living and true God.

It deserves to be carefully noted also, that the kind of worship which men render to their God will necessarily correspond to the ideas of God which they have formed and entertained. False ideas of God must always produce false worship; and as the character of the God is, such will be the character of the worship. But worship stamps its own character upon the worshipper, by repetition, by superstitious credence, by the sanction which it gives to the practices which it enjoins, and by the force of the instinctive tendency which man has to aim at resembling the object of his worship. I need not illustrate this at any length, or by any recondite instances. It is enough to suggest that the worship of the deities of Greece and Rome could not produce moral virtues, and to appeal to history in proof that it did not. The worship of the licentious Jupiter could not produce moral purity;—of Mars might promote martial courage, energy, and enterprise, but could not tend to produce gentle pity and mercy;—of Mercury might countenance theft and cunning, but could not be favourable to honesty and truth;—of Bacchus might stimulate festive extravagance and debauchery, but could not tend to encourage sobriety, industry, and self-control;—of Venus,—to what could that worship lead but to

scenes of gross pollution, such as shuddering humanity sickens even to imagine? Having suggested these undeniable consequences of even Greek and Roman idolatry, there is no need to touch, even in thought, the darker horrors of those wilder and more hideous systems of false worship to which allusion has been made; and of which more than enough will be found related in works that treat of the countries in which those systems have been, or still are, prevalent.

Though mankind had lost all true revelation, retaining only such dim traditions as might have induced them to inquire into the deep truths and principles which these traditions still contained, but which only impelled them to frame and nourish superstitious fables, yet they were human; and they possessed that human morality, and its great principle, *conscience*, which renders society still possible. They could not but feel, and they did feel, that moral evil existed, and was the cause of the depravity and crime which produces human misery. But they had no idea whatever of the origin of evil in man; and no idea of any method by which it might be restrained. It is remarkable, that while many of the philosophers wrote beautifully and truly of the beauty of virtue, of moral duty, and of the excellence of truth, yet none of them attempted to control his own conduct by these rules, or to make his own life an example of the value of his own precepts. Not even Socrates, Plato, Zeno, Cicero, Seneca, can be cited as an example which any man would be warranted wholly to follow, but rather in many points to shun. And it is still more worthy of remark, that not one of them had any the least idea of any such supernaturally communicated aid from their deities, in the performance of moral and religious duties, as is familiarly known to us by the hallowed term "*grace*," to which every Christian attaches rightly so much importance.

I should like to dwell on this thought, were this the proper opportunity for it. Such an opportunity will present itself afterwards; but even here I may offer a few suggestions. Among ancient nations it was not unusual for them to feign sudden interpositions of their various deities on behalf of favourite heroes; but while great deliverances might be effected, or great deeds be achieved, by means of these interpositions, no permanent *moral change* was wrought in the hero himself by them, and they never amounted to a progressive moral change

in his nature. In truth, no such idea was ever entertained by the votaries of any false religion, is not yet, nor ever can be; because no such idea as the restoration to the divine favour by means of the restoration of the divine image to the soul was, or could be, entertained by them. The Christian, on the other hand, is spiritually conscious, that without this constantly dwelling and even *prevenient grace*, he can neither endure trials, resist temptations, nor perform duties; and that an inexhaustible treasury of this grace resides in Christ for him, and is bestowed upon him, by the ministration of the Holy Spirit; and that thus, having been *redeemed* and *justified*, he is also *sanctified*, and the divine image restored. This grace revelation alone can *give*, and no false religion could even *imagine*.

Resuming our more direct course, we notice further, that the notions of the ancients respecting the immortality of the human soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments, were very dark and indefinite. Socrates rather hoped than believed it, saying, that "though he should be mistaken, he at least gained this much, that the expectation of it made him less uneasy while he lived; and if he erred, his error would die with him." Beyond this even Plato did not pass. And Cicero, after having brought forward a variety of arguments in support of the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and referred to others on the opposite side of the question, says, "Which of these is true, the Deity alone knows; and which is most probable, is a very great question." Seneca, referring to the opinions of several philosophers in favour of this doctrine, says, "Immortality, however desirable, was rather *promised* than *proved* by these great men." Even those of them who seemed most firmly to hold some kind of belief in some kind of an immortality, as the poets often did, or seemed to do, represented it as a vague, shadowy, dream-like existence, incapable of anything like real happiness; while they rejected the idea of the resurrection of the body as altogether incredible. It will very easily be perceived that such notions must have deprived the moral faculty of much of its power to hold evil passions in check, by cutting away the salutary dread of future retribution. One inevitable result was, the unimpeded progress of vice and immorality in all nations, and among all classes, to such a degree as is fearful to contemplate. Another result was, the utter disregard shown to human life in general, manifested in

various ways. The stern Stoic, when frustrated in his designs, felt no hesitation in committing suicide—even deemed it laudable. Death was the common punishment for nearly all crimes,—with this distinction, that as the possibility of punishment then ended, it was often preceded by as much protracted torture as possible. The proud Roman citizen, though perhaps valuing himself highly, and highly valued by others as a patriot, had no mercy to show to his antagonist, and was a remorseless tyrant to his slaves.

These were the notions of ignorant men, in remote times, some may say; and though they show the value of clearer and better ideas than antiquity possessed, it does not follow that there is equal necessity for a supernatural revelation in modern and more enlightened days. Let us look at this objection for a little, and try to estimate its real value.

It was in comparatively modern and enlightened days that what we term British Deism took its rise, and did its utmost to banish the Christian faith out of this country. This attempt was begun by Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who was perhaps the best, that is, the most moral and candid, man, as well as one of the ablest of the modern deistical philosophers; and yet his writings are self-contradictory to a very remarkable degree, so that they could furnish no absolute basis of belief either for himself or for any other person. The self-contradictions of Hobbes are still more numerous and glaring,—such as, that the Scriptures are the voice of God, and yet that they have no authority but what they derive from the civil magistrate; that inspiration is the immediate gift of God, and yet that the claim to it is a sign of madness; that God exists, and yet that what is not matter, is nothing; that honour, worship, praise, and prayer, are due to God, and yet that all religion is ridiculous. The accomplished and ingenious Earl of Shaftesbury was not behind even Hobbes in the art of contradicting himself, of which his eloquent writings furnish almost innumerable instances. One may be enough,—“that he who denies a God, sets up an opinion against the very wellbeing of society; and yet that atheism has no direct natural tendency to take away a just sense of right and wrong.” Collins and Woolston follow the same course, beginning with complimentary language and strong laudations of the facts recorded in the Gospels; and yet declared the same Gospels “full of incredibilities, im-

possibilities, and absurdities,"—"more like the tales in Gulliver's Travels than anything else." The writings of the elegant, but fickle and changeable, Lord Bolingbroke (the great friend of Pope), exceeded probably all his predecessors in self-contradictions, so that it might almost be said that he bestowed on every known opinion in religion and morality equal praise and condemnation,—at one time averring that he was a sincere inquirer into the truth of Christianity, at another, avowing that he wrote expressly to subvert it.

The moral sentiments of these British deists not only abounded in self-contradictions, like their religious opinions, but were often so grossly abhorrent to all right moral principles, that they can scarcely be mentioned. Lord Herbert declared "that men are not hastily to be condemned who are led to sin by bodily constitution; that the indulgence of licentiousness and anger is no more to be blamed than the thirst occasioned by dropsy." Hobbes taught "that every man's judgment is the only standard of right and wrong; that every man has a right to all things, and may lawfully get them if he can." Lord Bolingbroke taught "that all our passions may be lawfully gratified, if they can be *safely* gratified; that man lives only in the present world, and is only a superior animal; that the chief end of man is to gratify the passions and inclinations of the flesh." Among David Hume's writings, and especially in his private correspondence, the most immoral sentiments are expressed. To mention but one or two points: he maintained that there could be no evil in setting free a few ounces of a certain red fluid called blood, when the possessor of it stood in the way of one's interest; that adultery *must* be practised, if men would obtain all the advantages of life; that, if generally practised, it would in time cease to be scandalous; and that, if practised secretly and frequently, it would by degrees come to be thought no crime at all."

Such was the *religion*, and such the *morality*, of the deistical philosophers of enlightened Britain in modern times, even till near the end of last century,—religion and morality such as constrains us to say, that if even the ancient world needed a revelation to arrest its downward progress in immorality, vice, degradation, and misery, much more had a revelation become necessary for enlightened Britain and her philosophical deists in comparatively modern times,—if not a new revelation, at

least a quickening and revival of that already given, and from which these men had first turned away, and then which they vainly as well as wickedly sought to subvert and destroy.

One other proof and illustration of the necessity of revelation may be given. The writings of the British deists found their way to France, and were eagerly adopted by the philosophers, as they delighted to be thought, of that country. France was at that period in the height of prosperity, civilisation, and a spurious appearance of refined and voluptuous elegance. Learning was in its highest state of advancement; and a species of extreme politeness, or *politesse*, gave an air of gracefulness to the whole demeanour of that gay people, such as had never before been reached in any country. But the atheistical philosophers got the power into their hands; and what was the result? It was as if a volcano had suddenly burst upon the world, and disgorged its fiery flood over all Europe. Such a scene of cruelty, cold-blooded malignity, beastly impurity, insatiable rapacity, wild, heaven-defying, and blasphemous impiety, immediately displayed its hideous form as the world had never previously beheld. The only ray of hope which brightened the dismal prospect was, that this horrible system contained in itself the principles and elements of its own speedy destruction. Atheism had no bond of union to keep together those who entertained that pernicious *no-belief*,—no basis of mutual confidence. By its very nature Atheism generates suspicion, and consequently hatred, in every breast; and it is actuated by a selfishness which utterly disregards all the ties of nature, of gratitude, and of friendship. To an atheist, *fear* becomes the ruling passion. Conscious of his own want of virtue, of honour, and of humanity, he naturally views his fellows in the same light, and is ready to put them out of the way as soon as they appear to be, in any degree, likely to become obstacles to any of his desires. Hence the bloody actors in this horrible scene, after glutting their fiend-like passions with the slaughter of all whom they counted their enemies, turned their murderous weapons against each other. It became the death-grapple of assassin with assassin, demon with demon, till carnage itself grew faint and weary, gorged and glutted to satiety.

Enough, surely, has been said to confirm and illustrate the truth of our position, that *a divine revelation is necessary for man*. The ancient world turned away from it, in the pride of their

denial of its need, lost its benignant influence and holy light by trusting in the dim light of their violated natural theology and impossible natural religion, and sunk deeper and deeper into darkness and degradation, out of which their wisest and best philosophers could not grope their way. The modern world abjured the clearer light around them, and strove to frame a new natural religion, all the best elements of which were borrowed from the Bible, but had to be contradicted, to make room for their own wayward and sinful fancies; but these self-contradictions of the British deists paralysed their efforts, and prevented them from obtaining any dangerous amount of influence in this land. In France, a Popish country, they had no Bible to treat with at least some respect; consequently their deadly principles soon acquired full and paramount ascendancy, till they were swept away in the torrent of the bloody deluge which they had poured abroad. But all *sin is destruction*, and in its fullest development is *self-destructive*. It was so in that instance; it will be so in every corresponding instance in which its sweltering venom attains to full malignity. And the time must and will come, when it will be universally admitted and known, by mournful or by happy experience, "that belief in the divine revelation by God of Himself, His character, and a remedial measure for man's salvation, is absolutely necessary for man's moral, social, and spiritual welfare, both in this world and the world to come; and that this divine revelation is fully contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the Bible."

CHAPTER II.

DIRECT AND POSITIVE EVIDENCE OF REVELATION.



OUR preliminary investigations, carried forward, I trust, with sufficient caution, have led us to these important conclusions : That a divine revelation is *possible* ; that it is *probable*, understanding by this term, *likely to be expected, and capable of being proved* ; and that it is *absolutely necessary* for man's moral, social, and spiritual welfare, both in this world and in the world to come. We are, then, at length in a right condition to ask, with all possible and earnest directness, the great question, "Have we sufficient evidence to prove that God has actually given to man a supernatural revelation?" And we are entitled to demand an equally earnest and direct answer to this great and solemn question.

It will be borne in mind, that even in our preliminary remarks, while we have found universal traces of some primitive traditions, leading to the strong conviction that such a revelation was originally given to man, we yet found that universal tradition so vague, obscure, and corrupt, that in no instance can it be received as adequate to effect the purpose, or serve the end for which revelation is required. We cannot find it in the Hindu Vedas and Shasters ; or in the fabulous legends of China ; or in the hoary superstitions of Egypt ; or in the Zabaism of the ancient Iranians ; or in the mythic hero-gods of Chaldea. All these we have already seen to be equally void of rational credibility in themselves, and insufficient for the purposes of a divine revelation. There is but one book in the world to which we can direct our attention, with the reasonable hope of finding in it the revelation of which we stand so urgently in need, and to which that book itself lays claim. That book is the BIBLE, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,—claiming to be the revelation of Himself, His character, His laws, His will, His relation to man, the

cause of man's moral misery, and the one remedial measure which God has been pleased to give.

SEC. I. HISTORICAL VERACITY OF THE BIBLE.

This revelation is essentially one, though it has been given in two distinct divisions, and in two distinct languages. We may term it Hebrew and Gentile, because its first division relates to the Hebrew race, and its second to all nations; or Hebrew and Greek, from the two languages; or Mosaic and Christian, from its twofold dispensational aspect: but it is still essentially one, inasmuch as it all purports to come from the one God, to whose oneness it throughout bears record,—relates to the one remedial measure which it reveals,—and is singularly linked with the history of the one chosen race and people to whom, and through whom, it was communicated to the world. Even in this respect the Bible claims and takes a peculiar position. All other religions, religious traditions, and religious records, so far as these exist, allow and proclaim a plurality of gods, relate to special nations, and admit co-existent relations and duties to a variety of co-existent, and in many instances co-equal, deities. But while the Bible proclaims the unity of the one, only, supreme, and eternal God, and condemns severely the idolatrous worship of all other nominal deities as no gods, but dumb, insensate idols, it at the same time demands from all nations the worship of this one, only, supreme, and eternal God. On this account many among the ancient nations regarded the religion of the Hebrews with extreme dislike, as an unsocial and intolerant religion; and many among those who claim credit for enlightened and liberal notions, regard Christianity with similar aversion, on account of what they term its intolerance, and its claims of universal diffusion and supremacy. But as even Greek philosophers could arrive at the notion that there could be but one supreme God, though one only among them dared to encounter the deadly hatred of superstition, by making his conviction somewhat publicly known, no true Christian need hesitate to avow his conviction, that this very element in the religion of the Bible—this unaccommodating and uncompromising claim to universal supremacy which it makes for the one, only God—is itself a strong proof of its divine origin, so different from the claims of every other religion and religious

record in the world. It ought not, indeed, to be expected to be otherwise, if there be, as we have seen proved, even by Natural Theology, necessarily *one* infinite, eternal, personal *God*, and *one* deep *moral malady* affecting all mankind, for which there can be only the *one remedy*, provided and revealed by the *one offended God*.

But, drawing closer to the subject, we crave attention to the particular view which we are now about to state. The revelation which is contained in the Bible is both essentially *one* in its nature and design, and throughout *historical*, both in its relation to the Hebrew race and nation, and in its relation to all other nations, particularly those with whom they came into contact, in various periods of their lengthened history. This deserves to be peculiarly noted, for various reasons. In the first place, it deserves to be noted that the Bible, by its historical character, demands a historical investigation and proof, and at the same time exposes itself freely to the most searching investigation and scrutiny on that ground. This no imposture would dare to do; yet this the Bible does with the utmost openness, even by its very structure, as a history,—and that, too, not merely the history of a nation, or a tribe separated, it might be, from nearly all other nations and tribes, whose records could not easily be either proved or their errors detected, but a history which has to do with the human race; and although keeping close to the records of the Hebrew people, treats also of every great and ruling nation by which the destinies of the world have been swayed.

The Bible is, therefore, in a very decided sense, the history of the whole human family,—the history of the world,—especially the history of the civilised and ruling nations of the world. If, then, in even its historical records there be any statements which can be refuted, or shown to be contrary to the well-authenticated records of great civilised nations, the detections of these merely historical errors would inevitably prove fatal to its claims to be a supernatural revelation. It commences by giving an account of the creation of the world and man; it records the primitive holiness and happiness of man's original character and condition, and relates his rebellious sin, his fall, and the misery that ensued; and it continues its historical narrative till it has recorded the dreadful occurrence of a deluge in which the whole human race perished, with the

exception of one single family, miraculously preserved in an ark, which had been constructed for that purpose, in compliance with a divine warning and command. On the assumption that this whole record is a fable, there would be no probability of anything like it occurring among the most primitive traditionary annals of any other nation. But on the assumption that it is true, we may well expect that events of such infinite importance must have left their stamp and impress on the ancient annals or traditions of every nation. Now, in point of fact, we do find, in the most ancient traditionary records of every nation, possessing intelligence enough to have even traditions, very evident traces of some dim knowledge of these very events. Among the ancient Babylonians, as related by Berosus,—among the ancient Egyptians, among the Chinese, among the Persian, or, rather, Iranian nations of Bactria, Media, and Persia,—among the ancient Phœnicians, and even among the Mexicans and Peruvians, in the American Continent,—we find traditionary legends, all bearing a close resemblance to these statements of Bible history, as related in the book of Genesis.

But we must direct attention to this point. In the Bible history every statement is made in the most plain, simple, and direct manner, as an unexaggerated narrative of facts ought to be made. In the ancient traditions to which we have referred, everything assumes a wild, distorted, fabulous, and legendary aspect, implying that these events had actually been once known to their ancestors as historical truths, but had acquired their fabulous aspect in the process of transmission through successive generations. This is exactly in accordance with what we find in cases with which we are more intimately acquainted. When some signal event takes place in a country, such as those that mould its condition and character, and therefore belong to its history, that event is recorded in its history as a plain, unvarnished narrative of facts, and is historically preserved in that condition. But the same event enters into the traditions of the country, arouses all its impassioned and imaginative feelings, receives embellishments and exaggerations from each succeeding generation, and at length, while retaining the main historical facts, presents them all in a fabulous aspect,—all the heroes become demigods, all the villains are darkened into demons. The conclusion is obvious. In the Bible we have the true historical narrative; in the remote and

dim traditions of all ancient nations we have the fabulous and exaggerated legends of the same events.

Advancing along the historical narrative of the Bible, we find the record of the confusion of tongues at Babel, the dispersion of the great central body of mankind throughout the world, and their formation into races, nations, and tribes. We turn again to ancient profane history and tradition to ascertain if anything similar can be found. Here, again, we find, not history copied in its severe and dignified simplicity, but some dark legends of traditionary antiquity gathered up and recorded by the most ancient explorers of those dim realms; and here also we find the resemblance to be strong enough to vouch for the truth and reality of the historical narrative in the Bible.

Still following the course of Bible history, we come to Moses,—to the inspired historian himself, whose historical narrative so boldly comes into contact with the fabulous legends of every country, explains them, constrains them to bear testimony to its truth, and maintains at the same time its high supremacy in all the characteristics of true and original history. I am quite aware that almost innumerable cavils and captious objections have been raised against the truthfulness and the trustworthiness of the Mosaic history, even as history, especially by German philosophical sceptics, unphilosophical men of what they term “the higher criticism,” and irrational rationalists; and some of their objections I shall notice in the proper place. Meantime, there is one kind of objection which may fairly be noticed here. The question is asked, How did Moses obtain his historical knowledge? And forthwith the raiser of the question sets about to give such an answer as seems to him satisfactory. There had been, he assumes, two primitive religions, the one comprising the worship and the worshippers of Elohim, the other that of Jehovah, and each had preserved written records of their ancient beliefs. Moses obtaining possession of these records, very dexterously combined them, and out of the two thus combined produced that earliest part of his historical narrative which is contained in the book of Genesis. And all this dexterous management of Moses remained undiscovered till within our own days, when the whole affair was brought to light by some learned German. How these two primitive records had been preserved till the

time of Moses he does not inform us; nor what became of them afterwards, so that their respective votaries never remembered them, never again found them, never manifested any suspicion of what had been done, but continued to receive and hold the amalgamation as the sole primitive record,—how all this took place this same profound German does not inform us.

Happily, however, we do not need any such information. Other learned Germans have arisen and refuted the fabulous hypothesis,—as you will find in Hengstenberg and Hävernicks, so far as any such refutation was necessary. We do not deny that it was so far necessary; for on whatever part of the sacred record an assault is made, that part must be defended; and it generally happens that the point thus assailed and defended becomes ever afterwards unassailably strong. But without further noticing this German hypothesis, we may examine the question which it raised and assumed to answer. We have no proof that writing was known and practised before the flood; and as little that it was not. But in consequence of the prolonged lives of the antediluvian patriarchs, the whole events between the creation and the deluge were contained within the compass of three lives,—or, rather, of two, for Methuselah was born more than 300 years before the death of Adam, and died only the year before the flood. Shem was 100 years old before the flood, and might have been personally acquainted with Methuselah, who was long a contemporary with Adam; and as Shem lived till Isaac was 110 years old, and even till after Jacob's return to Palestine from Padan-Aram, it is possible that Jacob may have conversed with Shem, who had also conversed with Methuselah, who was long and intimately acquainted with Adam. And as all these patriarchs were God-fearing and truthful men, and had ample time and inducement to make themselves completely acquainted with these sacred narratives, and to transmit them in their pure simplicity as they received them; and as the living links in this chain of transmission were so few, there is no difficulty in believing that, even though not written, the narrative descended to Moses unimpaired.

On the other hand, there is no reason to suppose that there existed no written records till the time of Moses. Recent discoveries have proved that the ancient Babylonians and Assyrians

were in possession of a written language, and written, or at least insculpted, records, at least as early as the time of Abraham. Egyptian discoveries have also proved that the Egyptians were acquainted with the art of making sculptured and engraved historical records at least as early as the period of the same patriarch. Were we inclined to adopt the extravagant chronology of the German authors with regard to the antiquity of Egypt, we might assert that the Egyptians were well acquainted with the art of preserving historical records by means of hieroglyphical inscriptions, and even absolute writings, long before the age of Abraham. But, without adopting their theories, we may fairly assert, what they will not deny, that previous to that period the art of preserving historical narratives by sacred writings was well known in ancient Egypt. If so, it is not an extravagant supposition that Abraham may have brought with him from Chaldea, where it was already well known, as buried sculptures testify, the art of preserving historical records by written or engraven narratives, or may have acquired that art in Egypt during his friendly residence there. In either case, he could have learned from Shem what *he* learned from Methuselah, and what *he* learned from Adam; and might then have inscribed or written that very directly transmitted record, which could have been easily preserved among his descendants, and thus reached Moses in all its primitive simplicity and integrity.

We by no means say that this *was* the case, for it has not been so recorded and transmitted to us; but we have indulged a little in the proofs of hypothesis-making; and we are persuaded that our hypothesis is at least as plausible as any German hypothesis, and much more probable than the double-document theory.

But we have no occasion to invent any hypothesis, or frame any theory, with regard to the supposed question, How Moses obtained his information. The sacred and ever-recurring formula, "*The LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*" gives us direct information on the point. It matters not to us whether there *could* be written records or not,—whether there *were* written records or not. Moses was directed in what he wrote by the immediate instruction of God, and therefore what he wrote was the direct, plain, impressive, and absolute truth,—truth in its clear simplicity, like the sun alone in the mid heavens of

noon. It is on this that we rest our faith unhesitatingly; and we dismiss our own hypothesis with as little compunction as we do those of the profoundest and most learned German. "The LORD spake unto Moses," and by Moses still speaks to us. This is to us ample assurance, that what Moses said and wrote is true.

Before quitting this topic, however, it may be right to direct attention to one point. Ever since the time of Moses the record is not only historical, but is in constant contact with other history, which began to be written not very long after that period. The Hebrew historical narratives are so intertwined with all their religious beliefs and observances, that whatever could shake the credibility of the history would equally affect the truthfulness of the religion. For this reason infidelity has generally, and of late years particularly, striven to shake the credibility of the Hebrew historical narratives. But this attempt has been most signally and providentially defeated. The key to the Egyptian hieroglyphic writings and inscriptions has been discovered, the huge mysterious pyramids have been opened and explored, the sphinx has given up her secret, the sarcophagi have rendered back their dead, and departed Pharaohs and their priests have borne, and are still bearing, testimony to the truth of the Mosaic records. Nor is this all. The huge mounds that cumbered the banks of the Tigris, hiding the buried palaces and temples of proud Assyria, have recently been opened, and forced also to disclose their hitherto unimagined wonders. The fierce and haughty Sennacherib has himself been compelled to produce his sculptured and inscribed testimony to the truth of what the prophet Isaiah had recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures. And even the mighty and terrible Nebuchadnezzar, from amid the ruins of the great Babylon, which he built for the glory and majesty of his kingdom, reappears, declaring that the prophet Daniel did indeed speak what was told to him by the God of heaven. No longer need the infidel venture to dispute the historical accuracy and truth of the Old Testament Scriptures, for that has been proved by Divine Providence itself.

It will have been observed that the Mosaic history is not merely supernatural, as the early historical legends of all other ancient nations are: they have the supernatural element, but that element both keeps its own place and maintains its own

character in every instance. There is none of the wild and monstrous intermingling of gods and demigods in the hot and bloody hurly-burly of fierce wars and battles, as we find in the early fabulous legends of Greece and Rome; and none of the still more wild and monstrous transformations which we find in Hindu mythology, and even in the less huge and grotesque fables of the Semitic nations. Throughout the Hebrew history there is a grave, simple, sober, and solemn propriety in all the records of the supernatural, which does not disturb the proper course of the natural, so that the history remains direct history still. The Bible truthfully, naturally, calmly relates what is at once solemnly supernatural in its proper element and character, and what is simply historical, whether nationally or in the domain of family and domestic events, in a manner as plain and direct as if the whole design had been to produce a familiar domestic narrative.

Still another point demands attention. In the case of all other ancient nations, the records, even historical, were in the keeping of a separate class or caste—a priesthood. This was so much and so universally the case, that there cannot yet be found among the relics of ancient nations anything of even a historical character which was not prepared by the priesthood, and retained in their possession. It was not till the free and inquisitive spirit of Greece forced its way into these sacred enclosures, that history began to assume its true character as a natural record of national events. When the father of profane history, as he is called, *Herodotus*, travelled into remote countries, however civilised they might be, or pretend to be, it was to the priesthood that he was constrained to betake himself for information. And though it is plain enough, from many of his remarks, that he did not fully trust these priests, yet, as he could not obtain information from any other source, he was obliged to accept it as the only kind of historical information that was within his reach. Further, let it be borne in mind, that the priesthood formed the only class in those ancient nations that possessed any learning; and that, being well aware of the power which this gave them, they retained it exclusively to themselves. This may account largely for the wild, absurd, and monstrous mingling of superstitious fables in all their ancient histories; but it suggests to us also the thought, that very little confidence deserves to be placed in those historic

legends, framed by and kept carefully in the exclusive possession of a selfish, superstitious, self-interested priesthood.

In this respect, the Hebrew historical records were entirely different from those of every other ancient nation. Moses was not a priest, although of that tribe, the tribe of Levi, which afterwards became a priestly tribe. But neither the writings of Moses nor the sacred writings afterwards added to his, as continuing the sacred record, were ever exclusively in the possession of the priests. On the contrary, although the original copy of the law as delivered by Jehovah to Moses, was placed in the side of the ark, and placed in the keeping of the priests, the whole body of the people were strictly enjoined to know it, to write copies of it for themselves, and to teach it to their children; and even the king was required to write out a copy for his own personal use. Yet further, the additional scriptures which were from time to time produced were seldom the production of priests, but of kings, as in the instances of David and Solomon, and of prophets in almost all other instances. The Hebrew Scriptures, therefore, were neither the production of a priest-caste nor in the exclusive possession of a jealous priesthood; and cannot justly be accused of that priestcraft which casts doubt and discredit on all other ancient historical yet priestly records.

We have thus briefly directed attention to the peculiarly direct and plain character of the Bible as a historical record, relating the history of the human race in general, and of one family and nation in particular, touching the history of all the ruling nations in the world in all their marked and special epochs; exposed, consequently, to detection everywhere and constantly, if detection had been possible, yet never detected in even a single inaccuracy, never exposed in one single instance of misrepresentation or falsehood. Even this view places the Bible far above all other books in the world, both with regard to the history which it relates, so plain, perspicuous, and devoid of fable; and with regard to the religious truths and principles which it teaches, so unapproachably sublime, and so infinitely important to every human being, and to the whole human race.

SEC. II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF HISTORICAL EVIDENCE.

We have, in the previous section, directed attention to the fact, that the Bible has throughout, in a very special manner, the character of an *intentionally historical record*; and that, too, relating not only to the history of a peculiar people, but to the history of the whole known world. It has been shown, that while this gives it special value, it also places it in the position where its credibility can be most easily and amply tested: it is in contact with all the world, it claims to be believed by all the world, and it can be tested in every point by all the world. It offers no compromise; it will accept no compromise; and it challenges investigation while it demands belief. Fixing, then, for a little, our attention upon the historical aspect of the Bible, let us inquire what are the *general principles of historical evidence*.

A sufficiently extensive investigation of the general principles of historical evidence, enough to prove that any work by which they are characterized ought to be received as true history, may be obtained by tracing carefully the following topics:—

1. That documents containing these historical statements must be preserved in the public records of the nation whose history they relate; 2. That the chief elements of the principles and events thus recorded must be also found embodied and manifested in its laws, institutions, and character; 3. That there must be thus visibly displayed what may be termed a national life, bearing living testimony to the series of facts and principles historically recorded; and 4. That as these events were transacted in special localities, there must be found localities suited to them; and there may be expected to be found in these localities some memorials of the events, such as monuments erected to commemorate them, or local traditions in which they have been transmitted, agreeing in the main with the historical records.

1. The *first* topic, then, which we have to investigate, or the first element of true historical evidence, is, *That documents containing these historical statements must be preserved in the public records of the nation whose history they relate*. The necessity and importance of this principle will be at once admitted without much argument or illustration. Still it seems expedient to give it a little elucidation, and then to show how

it applies to the Bible. Among all ancient nations that had made any progress whatever, we find both the existence of historical statements preserved as public records, and frequent references to such documents. The want of the art of printing, and the cumbrous and tedious process of committing such documents to the preservation of sculptured or engraved pillars, rocks, slabs, or baked bricks, rendered such documents comparatively rare in ancient times. They are, nevertheless, found everywhere,—among the ruins of palaces, in tombs, on rock-monuments, or tablets smoothed for the purpose, on prepared stone pillars, and on baked bricks. It is now well known, since the discovery of the method of interpreting the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and the oriental arrow-headed inscriptions, that in Egypt every king made his own tomb a historical record of his exploits, taking care to have the structure commenced at the beginning of his reign, and adding every year the leading events of that year, till the record closed by his death. In addition to this, the chief temples contained a continuous record of the names and titles of these kings in succession; so that, between the two places, tombs and temples, there was preserved as full a record of historical statements as the nature of the circumstances and the method admitted, and in the very places where the public archives of the nation were kept. It was from these public records that Manetho, priest of Sebennytus, produced what he gave to Herodotus as the basis of his Egyptian history.

Again, in different parts of ancient Persia, at Hamadan (Ecbatana), Nakshi Rustam, Persepolis, and very recently at Shushan, there have been found and read inscriptions recording the chief events which took place during the reigns of the great Persian monarchs; and all these were public documents, and so placed that they could be read and known by all to whom they were matters of interest—so careful were they to preserve the knowledge and manifest the credibility of their history. And it is right to mention, that so far as these public historical documents extend, they confirm the truth of what we already knew from other sources, and very specially from the Bible, confirming the accuracy of that sacred record where it differs from the accounts given by the Greek historians. The recent excavations and discoveries at Nineveh have been peculiarly prolific in revealing the treasures of ancient history, and en-

abling us to know how that history was recorded and preserved. The palace of the sovereign was itself the historical monument and record of his reign and achievements. Sculptured and inscribed slabs of gypsum, placed around the inner walls of state apartments and grand audience halls, displayed the likeness of the monarch himself, pictures of his chief exploits, and outlines of his wars and victories. In some instances stone pillars were found, on which were engraved lives and successions of dynasties, as if for the very purpose of recording and preserving their proper history. In other instances there were found vast quantities of inscribed bricks and cylinders, preserved in a separate apartment, which from that peculiarity has been called "the chamber of records." Among these there have been found brief narratives of treaties, and in at least one instance the impression of the signet-ring and seal of the Assyrian king, as signing the treaty which had just been concluded with his Egyptian antagonist.

It is scarcely necessary to mention, that among more modern nations, from the time of the Greeks and Romans till the present, all historical documents are carefully preserved as public records, in some place at once of publicity and of safety; and that no man would venture to produce a history, without referring not only to previous admitted historical statements, but also in important matters to state papers, kept in the state paper offices of the various countries whose transactions he has undertaken to record.

The application of all this to the Bible is obvious. The Old Testament Scriptures were themselves the public historical records of the Hebrew nation. From the time of Moses they were publicly preserved, publicly employed, and additions publicly made to them from time to time by public persons, who were publicly recognised as qualified to undertake, and authoritatively employed by Jehovah, the theocratic King, to perform, that office. That the most extreme care would be taken in the reception of these additional records may be assumed as certain, from this consideration, that what they recorded had to be received by the nation, not only as matter of historical veracity in which all were concerned, but also as matter of faith, which all were to believe. Nor was it only in tombs and temples, and by the imperfect and crude method of inscriptions on stone and brick, that the Hebrew

records were constructed and preserved ; but they were written fully, deliberately, and carefully on suitable and portable materials, copied by the learned tribe which was diffused throughout the nation for that among other purposes, and placed in the hands generally of the whole people, so that no improper tampering with, or perversion of, the public records could take place without instant detection, as they were universally known. The universality of their knowledge of these historical and religious records appears very remarkably in the case of Jephthah, an exile and a freebooter, when he with such pointed precision proved from history the rights of the Jews against the claims of the invading Ammonites. We are fully warranted, we think, to conclude, that the Hebrew Scriptures possess this first and most important principle of historical evidence more completely than do the annals of any other ancient people, and even as highly as any historical record can do, with all the facilities and securities that modern times afford.

2. The *second* principle of historical evidence is, *that the chief elements of the principles and events thus recorded must be also found embodied and manifested in its laws, institutions, and character.* The application of this principle to the Hebrew nation is so absolute, that it is almost wholly superfluous to do more than state the principle. The writings of Moses actually *are* the code of the Hebrew laws and institutions, both civil and sacred ; and this needs but to be stated, for it admits of no dispute. Even among other ancient nations, Moses was always regarded as the lawgiver of the Jews. The Hebrew nation itself, therefore, in its very existence as a nation, is a permanent proof of the reality and truth of the book which contains the record of its laws and institutions. And as all these laws and institutions were known to the whole nation, and in full operation from the time of Moses, it is impossible that they could have been framed and instituted at any subsequent time, in his name and as having his authority, without immediate detection of the imposture.

The effect of these laws and institutions on their character as a people was very peculiar. Very frequently, almost incessantly, were the Jews engaged in the attempt to alter their religious institutions, so as to bring them into greater con-

formity with those of the neighbouring nations, and as frequently did they suffer under the punishments denounced in their law against all such attempts; and in their suffering they repented, returned to their duty and obedience, and were restored to peace and prosperity. These alternations proved that the Mosaic laws and institutions were too lofty and pure for the people; yet that they were so revered and believed as to constrain even a wayward and rebellious people to submit to them, and to receive gradually their impress on the national character. The peculiarities of national character produced by the permanent operation of these laws and institutions were more perceptible to other nations than it was to themselves, and caused them to be regarded generally as a peculiarly obstinate and intolerant people. They did not deny their laws, though they could not keep them; they did not obey their laws, though they preserved with jealous care and vigilance the Mosaic and prophetic history, in which these laws were contained; and thus even the fluctuations and struggles of the national character bore very direct and ample testimony to the veracity of the historical and prophetic record, in which these laws and institutions were contained, and by which these very fluctuations, struggles, and vicissitudes of conduct, character, and condition had been predicted.

This principle of historical evidence might be very easily and amply illustrated by reference to other nations, were that necessary. As one not very obvious, yet very remarkable instance, we may refer to the great confederacy of the several Greek kingdoms and states which enabled them to wage war against Troy. That event entered into the Grecian mind with the force of a law, and became the principle of numerous subsequent confederacies, enabling them in one memorable instance to confederate against, encounter, and bear back the whole force of the Persian empire. Individual liberty and combined confederacy in time of need became the leading element of the Grecian character, and gave to that wonderful people their high position in the world's history. When we look to Rome, we find in its earliest condition the rival elements of patricians and plebeians, from the struggles and ultimate balanced combinations of which it derived all its laws, institutions, and character. No history of Greece could be true, which did not record its principles of individual liberty

and conjoint confederacy; nor any history of Rome, which left unnoticed its patrician and plebeian elements and their republican union. In the laws, institutions, and character of Britain we can trace clearly both the Norman and the Saxon elements; and no history of Britain could be a true history which did not include these elements, and trace their operation in the laws, institutions, and character of the British nation. Very inaccurate, inadequate, and incomplete would be the history of Scotland, which did not record how the mailed tide of feudal invasion was rolled back by the strong arm of the mighty Scottish commoner, Wallace; or how its religious liberty was gained, in spite of sovereign and nobles, by the undaunted Knox; or how the base treachery and cruelty of a licentious monarch and his unprincipled courtiers were successfully resisted by the humble yet heroic martyrs of the covenant; and how all these contributed to form the laws, institutions, and character of the grave, earnest, and indefatigable Scottish people;—while the history which shall truly record all these will find its confirmation in those laws and institutions, and in that noble character.

3. The *third* principle of historical evidence is,—*That there must be thus visibly displayed what may be termed a National Life, bearing living testimony to the series of facts and principles historically recorded.* This principle is so closely related to that which has just been examined and explained, that it cannot require much illustration. When we use the term, National Life, we of course mean the actual concrete existence of a people living under the laws, enjoying the institutions, and manifesting a character in accordance with these laws and institutions, which we had previously found recorded in its history. The necessity of stating this as a principle of historical evidence will appear from this consideration, that a man of genius and speculatively philosophical character might produce an imaginary history of an imaginary people,—some Atlantis or Utopia,—with laws, institutions, and a character, all in beautiful harmony, but all fictitious. We test this work of philosophical genius by demanding its visible display in an actual national life; and if this cannot be shown, we reject it as a romance, how much soever we may admire the genius of its author. Nor is it any valid objection to this testing principle, to say that the nation so described has ceased to exist, and therefore can-

not now be visibly displayed in its national life. For no nation has ever existed in a state of such full development as to possess laws, institutions, and a national character, without giving some stamp and impress of its existence to the neighbouring nations with whom it held intercourse, and thereby leaving a record of itself in their records. Babylon and Assyria exist now but in name; but the histories of all contiguous nations, at one time contemporaneous with them, and still surviving, attest the actual existence of those perished nations, and furnish a clear idea of their national life. Contemporaneous history, then, affords us the criterion that we require, in order to distinguish between a historico-philosophical romance and the surviving historical records of an extinct nation; and we thus obtain our *third* principle of historical evidence even in the case of a nation that has ceased to exist.

The history of the Hebrew nation and people can stand the test of this principle of historical evidence in a very remarkable manner. For while we may consider its national existence as extinct, since it has not now any territorial position, any kingdom of its own, any being, rank, or power among the presently existing nations; yet all the histories of all the then existing nations bear ample evidence to the reality of its laws, institutions, character, and peculiar national life,—very much more, indeed, than they do to the contemporaneous national life of dead and buried Assyria, destroyed and desolate Babylon, or mute monumental Egypt. But although the Hebrews have long been extinct as a nation, they still exist as a people; and at this hour, throughout all the world, they continue visibly to display all the peculiar elements of their national life. Always and everywhere they cleave to their laws and institutions with desperate tenacity, and manifest the peculiar character which these were so fitted to embody and perpetuate; and as the prophetic element in their own ancient history had distinctly foretold both their universal dispersion into all the world, and their continual preservation in this scattered and despised condition, they are themselves the living, indestructible, and incontestable evidence to the truth of their ancient history. To all still existing nations with a continuous history and national life, this criterion very easily applies; to extinct ancient nations it can be applied by the testimony of contemporary history; but to the Hebrew nation and people it applies, and can be applied, in

both forms; and in each the historical evidence is equally distinct, satisfactory, and conclusive, as proving their history to be true.

4. The *fourth* principle of historical evidence is,—*That as these historical events were transacted in special localities, there must be found localities suited to them; and there may be expected to be found in these localities some memorials of the events, such as monuments erected to commemorate them, or local traditions in which they have been transmitted, agreeing in the main with the historical records.* The value of this principle it is not difficult to perceive; and it is capable of very extensive illustration, both with regard to the Hebrew history, and to all other historical records. When we think of ancient history, we direct our attention inevitably to the scenes where great events were transacted; and in viewing carefully those localities, we often find that we can both verify the statements of history, and correct any erroneous particulars that may have been introduced. We visit, for example, the narrow mountain-pass of Thermopylæ, and can at once perceive how possible it was that 300 determined Spartans, headed by a particular hero, could for a time hold at bay the whole innumerable horde of undisciplined and effeminate Persians. We view the wide, level plains of Lower Mesopotamia and Chaldea, traversed by the vast rivers of Tigris and Euphrates, or their confluent mighty ocean stream, and can at once perceive, that when the huge walls and towers of its great cities were cast down, and its numerous branching canals filled up, it would be changed into a vast, ruddy morass,—the haunt and “abode of all doleful creatures;” or, in dry periods, a wild, wide, sandy desert, “swept with the besom of destruction.” We gaze thoughtfully on Constantinople, and we understand its history; for, while we see how suitable it appeared to be for the metropolis of an empire, half Asiatic, half European, such as the oriental portion of the Roman world was, when Constantine chose Byzantium for his imperial residence, we also see that it could not permanently retain that imperial position; but that either the Asiatic element must obtain the ascendancy, as it did under the successors of Mohammed, or the European, as is taking place rapidly in our own times. Or we turn to Egypt and its wondrous river and river-valley, and there we see on every side scenes which verify ancient history; or read history, which

directs us to and explains those scenes, and that with such marvellous distinctness that we can neither doubt the history, nor mistake the locality, so precisely do they correspond and confirm each other. There is a double interest attached to Egypt and its histories and traditions; for we may find in them either the confirmation of ancient Grecian history, in suitable localities, memorials, and traditions, or the confirmation of Scripture history, in suitable localities, memorials, and traditions. We can inquire for the hundred-gated Thebes of Homer, or the Sesostris of the historians; and when we are guided to the Thebes, and explore its vast ruins of temples, tombs, and gigantic sculptured kings, we find proof at once of the almost incredible magnitude of the city, and of the tremendous power of the conquering monarch, whose colossal rock-hewn statues attest his unrivalled greatness, even allowing for the exaggerations of courtly flatterers.

But it is when we take the Bible in our hand, and while we peruse its historical narratives, and direct our attention to the localities where these recorded events were transacted, that we perceive the full force of this principle of historical evidence. We read about the years of famine, for example, and then mark carefully how entirely the fertility of Egypt depends upon the periodical overflowings of the Nile; and it becomes at once manifest, that if any events should occur to diminish considerably that annual overflow, the harvest would fail throughout the entire valley of the Nile and its fertile Delta, and the community would be smitten with famine. That such an event might be produced by a peculiar state of the weather in central Africa, near the sources of the Nile, is obvious and intelligible; but the effect only, not the cause, could be felt and known in Egypt, while of course it could not be predicted, except by the instruction which God, the Ruler of all events, might be pleased to communicate. Again, we look on the Nile; and in its reedy, sedgy, and mud-encrusted banks, we see what exactly accords with the narrative concerning the exposure and preservation of Moses. The Red Sea attracts our attention, and we search for the spot where the Israelites might have passed. It has always seemed to us a peculiar proof of the historical accuracy of the relation of that miraculous event, that to some it seems quite easy to account for it by natural causes,—by a prolonged ridge or sandbank near its lower gulf, an ebb tide,

and a strong north-east wind; and to others quite impossible, because there is no such ridge, because the fluctuations of the tide are not great enough, and because the wind has never been observed to have such influence. The reason of this is, that the natural and the miraculous are so wonderfully blended in the narrative, that any person who shall attempt to explain it by attending to merely the one only of these two elements must necessarily fail, especially if he restrict his attention to the *natural alone*. It was not possible naturally, by means of any natural causes in their natural operation; but admit the miraculous dividing of the waters, and then it was naturally or physically possible for the marching multitude of Israel to cross the narrow gulf through that miraculously constituted chasm between the night-fall and the dawn,—while Pharaoh's armed chariots and troops, entering at a later hour in their mad pursuit, entangled in the oozy and slimy deep, and thrown into confusion by the terrors of the Almighty Jehovah, were overwhelmed by the reflux billows rolling back tumultuously to fill again the awful supernatural void, at the moment when the Hebrews had gained the stedfast shore.

We might prosecute the inviting process of local and traditional proof throughout the entire Bible history, did our limits permit, or did it seem necessary; and we should find in every instance the locality and the tradition combining to confirm the history. We might trace the journeyings of the Israelites through the wilderness to Sinai; and as we gazed on its awful battlement-like cliffs and spiry summit, and listened to the traditions of the wandering Arab, feel assured that we had indeed reached the very place where Moses received the law from God. We might visit the tomb of Aaron, or turn aside into the wild and wonderful ravines of Petra, and mark the desolate rocky temples and sepulchres of the doomed dwellers in the clefts. We might direct our steps to the Dead Sea, and view the proofs of that terrible judgment, which turned a fertile plain and flourishing cities into a stagnant lake of molten sulphur. We might trace the river Jordan, note its rapid and dangerous fords, and that deep and rocky channel, which rendered it a defensive trench between the Promised Land and the heathen nations on the east, constraining them always to cross near its sources on the skirts of Lebanon,—confirming the prophetic language of foreign invasions from the north.

We might visit the relics of Bethlehem or Nazareth, or the cities near the sea of Galilee; or we might stand on Mount Olivet, or go round Jerusalem, and mark its towers and bulwarks, and palaces and tombs. In all these instances, and, in short, throughout the whole of Palestine and all adjacent countries, from Damascus to Sidon, Tyre, and Ptolemais, we should find history, and locality, and tradition, and monuments, and ruins, written records, and the talk of Arab guides and toil-worn, humble peasants alike, all combining into one unbroken and harmonious evidence, and all bearing full testimony to the absolute truthfulness, in every particular, of the Bible history.

We have thus stated, explained, and applied briefly, four principles of historical evidence, such as never were found, and never can be found, to unite in support of any fictitious narrative pretending to be history; and we have found them uniting in support of the truth of Bible history, even more completely than they do in support of any history which is more unhesitatingly and firmly believed. The inevitable conclusion is, *that in its historical character THE BIBLE is most certainly and absolutely true.*

SEC. III. APPLICATION OF GENERAL HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES TO THE BIBLE.

In the preceding section, it was our main design to state and illustrate those general principles of historical evidence, by which all true and authentic history will be found to be more or less definitely characterized. And although, in illustrating these general principles, we frequently, and in some instances even pointedly, made reference to Hebrew history, as contained in the Old Testament Scriptures, yet it seems due to the importance of the subject to make a more direct and full *application of them to the records of the whole Christian revelation, from the most ancient times to the present.* We are all the more inclined, even impelled, to do this, by the kind of challenge which assailants of Christianity have given to meet them on this historic area, by their assuming that position on which to set their battle in array against revelation. Not only have they attempted to vitiate the first book of the Pentateuch by their hypothesis of the combined Elohist and Jehovahist documents; but they have further attempted, by their “rationalism” and their “higher criticism,”

to resolve almost every recorded fact of Bible history into a *myth*; by which they mean, an embodiment or representation of some religious or superstitious principle in a fictitious narrative. According to that "higher criticism," as they term it, whenever anything of a supernatural character appears in the narrative, that portion of the record is not to be regarded as *history*, but as *myth*, and must be so interpreted as to be explained away. Now, as the Bible is at once throughout of an historical character, and throughout of a supernatural character, it is plain, that if its supernatural character can be made to destroy its credibility as history, it will be rendered self-contradictory, and its whole trustworthiness be thereby entirely overthrown. Such is the form and character of the recent and formidable assault on the historical credibility of the Bible made by the mythic theory of modern rationalists; and it is for the purpose of meeting the assailants on their own chosen arena or battle-ground, that we now proceed to apply the general principles of historical evidence directly and specifically to Bible history. We shall not, however, follow our antagonists into the jungles of mere captious objection, but keep to open ground, and establish manifest truth.

The Bible both begins, and proceeds throughout, in the character of a historical narrative of such facts and events as concern the whole human race; relating those facts and events in connection with moral and religious principles, in such a manner as at once to record and explain the whole history of man. It is with this comprehensive character of the Bible kept continually in view, that we proceed to trace some of its leading recorded facts in their related order. The first chapter of the book of Genesis relates in plain historical language the successive events of what has been called the *creation week*. It was certainly essential to a full and complete history of man, that he should be made acquainted with such great truths as the *origin of the world* which he inhabits, the *process by which it was prepared* for his abode, and the *condition and character of his first human ancestor*; inasmuch as it was impossible for him otherwise to have right ideas of God, the Creator of the world and himself, and of his duty to his and nature's Creator and God. That this essential information was communicated to Adam in such a manner as to give him all the knowledge on these points that he needed, we

cannot doubt; and whether it was transmitted to Moses by a chain of not more than five links, or whether it was given to him directly by a new revelation, we are not careful to inquire. The plain narrative, as we now have it, contains all that it was then necessary for man to know in his sinless condition,—all that it is yet necessary for Natural Theology to know, if Natural Theology were now enough, or natural religion were still possible for man—for man fallen and sinful. It tells man that material being is not eternal, but had a beginning, and that the Eternal and Almighty God was its Creator; that this world was prepared to be a suitable abode for man, by passing through *six successive conditions*, each caused by the direct creative fiat of God; and that, on the last of these creative periods, man was created, and to him exclusively was given a rational, moral, and personal mind, so endowed and qualified as to be capable of reflecting in its intellectual and moral principles the divine image; and, finally, that the Sabbath was instituted, at once to commemorate and to preserve this revelation. All this, and not less than this, the *first chapter of Genesis* teaches; more than this it was not necessary for new-created and sinless man to know; and it is not only perfectly possible, but extremely probable, *that it contains a brief statement of all that man did know before the fall, and has been recorded in its present axiomatic form for that very reason.* Let this idea be calmly entertained and thoughtfully pondered, that however desirable and necessary it may be for *us*—fallen and sinful men—to have now, in our present condition, a more full and definite revelation of God's character and laws, we have no reason to suppose that anything similarly ample and detailed was needed by *man in his state of primitive innocence*; and if the first chapter of Genesis contain, as it appears extremely probable it does, *a brief statement of the primitive revelation given to new-created and sinless man*, we are not warranted in expecting in it anything specially needed by *man fallen, sinful, rebellious, corrupt, depraved, and needing to be both redeemed and sanctified.*

Although we have no intention of plunging into the throng and confusion of combatants, striving fiercely about the meaning of the very brief narrative contained in the first chapter of Genesis, nor mean to make much use of the weapons employed on either side—philological, or geological; yet we do mean to

present an outline of the general meaning of that chapter, such as we hope may be somewhat satisfactory to the intelligent, earnest, and unprejudiced Christian inquirer and student of the sacred Scriptures, as a true historical record and revelation.

We commence by assuming, as already stated, that there is nothing in the first and second chapters of Genesis beyond what might have been contained in the first revelation to Adam. This sets aside any discussion as to the meaning of the term "day," as it could not have any fixed and definite meaning to him, and could convey no other idea than that of the successive periods in which successive creations were called into being, without determining anything regarding the length or shortness of their duration. We further state the now admitted principle, that revelation was not intended to teach science, and therefore uses no scientific terms, but is conveyed in such language as is adapted to express man's common conceptions of common phenomena, as perceived by the senses,—such as all men ordinarily use, whether they be men of science or not. Now, if science may be rightly defined as "the one link uniting the sense and reason of man to the observed phenomena of nature," it will follow, that while science may correct our mode of expressing *mental conceptions*, it cannot affect our mode of expressing our *sentient perceptions*; but both modes of expression may continue to be used in their respective provinces, without any hazard of either contradiction or confusion, by every person of adequate intelligence. And as the Bible uses the language of our common sentient perceptions, there cannot properly arise any collision between its plain statements and the scientifically expressed results of science, unless there be not only a difference between the modes of expression, but also a contradiction between the ideas so expressed. Again, as the statements of Moses have been supposed to be irreconcilable with the discoveries of geology, it may be fairly required of every person who ventures to produce this as an objection against the Bible, that he make it clear, both to his own mind and to that of every other man, that he perfectly understands both the statements of Moses and the discoveries of geology. For, until he perfectly understands not the *one only*, but *both*, he cannot possibly tell whether they are irreconcilable or not, and ought not rashly to make an assertion which it is not in his power to prove.

There was a mode of apparently reconciling the statements of the Mosaic record with the discoveries of geology, suggested by Dr. Chalmers about the beginning of this century, on this ground: Moses seems to limit the time of creation to *six natural days*; geology demands immense periods of time for the construction of its vast rock-system and fossil remains: may we not conceive the lapse of an immense period of time between the first and second verses of Genesis sufficient for the geologist? and then the Mosaic days may be allowed to retain only their natural duration. The adequacy of this hypothesis was long received, but has lately been disputed, and the “days” have been assumed to be periods of indefinite duration, coincident with the vast geologic periods. We do not think it either necessary or prudent to bind ourselves to either of these hypothetical solutions of the apparent difficulty. A man need not be greatly ashamed to say that he is not yet perfectly sure that he absolutely understands either Moses or geology; while he is quite sure that no intelligent geologist will say that he is absolutely certain what that science will, or may, ultimately teach. That it may ultimately become the needed link connecting man’s reason with the observed phenomena of nature, he may safely conclude; and that it will then reconcile and combine God’s creative acts, nature’s observed phenomena, and man’s scientific knowledge of them, he may feel perfectly assured; and may therefore, unalarmed, watch the progress of geology, and continue to study his Bible, till the Author of both produce the reconciliation.

In the meantime, however, there are already certain apparently approximating coincidences to which we wish to direct attention. The Mosaic record presents us with six successive “days.” For a time geology specified only *three* periods, or systems, which it termed *primary, secondary, and tertiary*; but of late these have been so loosened and expanded as to assume the form of several systems, some say *ten* or *twelve*. We venture to affirm that all these may be reduced to precisely *six* well-defined systems, neither fewer nor more. Let us present this remarkable coincidence in a tabular form, and arranged side by side in parallel columns.

GEOLOGICAL SYSTEM.

Central nucleus of the earth—Crystalline rocks—Unstratified—Without life—Depth unknown.

FIRST GEOLOGICAL PERIOD OR SYSTEM.

Unstratified and Non-fossiliferous Rocks.

Metamorphic group—Gneiss, slate, etc.—Powerful and prolonged volcanic agency—The earth in a semi-fluid condition.

SECOND GEOLOGICAL PERIOD.

Silurian and Devonian System.

The rocks, sedimentary and stratified—Graptolites—Some crustaceans and molluscs—In the Devonian or old red sandstone, numerous invertebrated fishes—A few plants, chiefly marine—The earth generally submerged.

THIRD GEOLOGICAL PERIOD.

Carboniferous System.

Enormous vegetation—Formation of the coal-measures by frequent elevations and subsidings—Molluscs—Fishes—Reptiles—The atmosphere still thick and humid, suited chiefly to cryptogamic plants and animals without lungs.

FOURTH GEOLOGICAL PERIOD.

Permian and Triassic System.

Almost universal submergence of land—Great paucity of animal life—Deposition of rocks to roof the carboniferous system—New red sandstone—Magnesian limestone—Marl slate—Close of what are called the palæozoic periods, and deposit of rock roofs for the carboniferous system.

FIFTH GEOLOGICAL PERIOD.

Cretaceous System.

Lias, oolite, Wealden clay, chalk—Alternate sub-aerial and sub-marine—Characterized chiefly by fossil saurians, gigantic birds, etc.

SIXTH GEOLOGICAL PERIOD.

The Alluvial System.

Ancient alluvium—Gigantic mammalia antecedent to man—Modern alluvium—Mammalia of the present races—Man—Diluvian sand-heaps—Raised banks—Unfossiliferous—Present aspect of the world.

MOSAIC RECORD.

The great general truth declared, that matter is not eternal—Had a beginning—That God created it.

FIRST MOSAIC, OR GENETIC, DAY.

The Production of Light.

Commencing action of the formative material forces—Heat—Electricity—Magnetism—Polar rotation—Closes with the night of their unseen progressive operation.

SECOND MOSAIC, OR GENETIC, DAY.

The Firmament, or Expanse.

The constitution of the atmosphere and clouds—The world covered with water—Consequent disintegration of the primitive rocks—Volcanic agency—Metamorphic and sedimentary rocks—Stratification advancing beneath the waters.

THIRD MOSAIC DAY.

Formation of Sea and Land.

Volcanic agency—Extensive elevations and subsidings—Vast, perhaps universal, archipelago of at least tropical temperature—Enormous vegetation on all elevations—The peculiar period of cryptogamic, or flowerless, and gigantic plants.

FOURTH MOSAIC DAY.

Sun, Moon, and Stars.

The heavenly bodies becoming visible, in consequence of an atmospheric change—Great preparation for the existence of animals with eyes and lungs to dwell on dry land, and for flowering plants, needing clear light.

FIFTH MOSAIC DAY.

Production of Marine Reptiles and Birds.

Huge marine and amphibious reptiles—True fishes—Gigantic birds—Sea, earth, and air now inhabited by new creatures and races.

SIXTH MOSAIC DAY.

Production of Land Animals of present Races.

The great extinct but unfossilized pachydermatous mammalia—Types and congeners of the present races of animals—Man—*The scene terrestrial*, and ending with the creation of man—No night mentioned, as in all the previous recorded "days."

It will be admitted that the preceding tabular and parallel arrangement presents a very remarkable coincidence throughout, and would completely harmonize the Mosaic record and the geological systems, if it could be adequately proved. Further, it will be observed that it does not require the rejection of the hypothesis produced by Dr. Chalmers, since it leaves the statement of the first verse in the region of time undefined, neither does it affirm that hypothesis; that it neither defines the geologic period, nor the Mosaic "day," neither provoking any antagonism, nor seeking any forced reconciliation between them; that it neither requires the aid of what has been called the "Mosaic Vision theory," nor rejects that theory; and that, nevertheless, it succeeds in exhibiting almost a perfect agreement between the plain Bible narrative and the most recent and matured results of geological science, as understood and stated by the ablest, best informed, and most accomplished geologists,—by such men as Professor Ansted, Professor Sedgwick, Sir Roderick Murchison, and Hugh Miller. I may be pardoned for adding, that the view here given is entirely my own; so that, although it may seem to have been borrowed from Hugh Miller's last work, it was written at least two years before that work appeared, and even, I believe, before that great man had himself arrived at his ultimate opinion on the subject. The thought that the first chapter of Genesis may be actually the *primitive Adamic revelation*, unless I greatly mistake its real value, will be found to have the power of removing many difficulties more completely and satisfactorily than anything that has ever previously been produced relative to that chapter, by introducing a new interpretative idea.

But let us now apply these views. It will be seen at once that no ancient cosmogony could for a moment withstand the application of modern geological science;—that science would dissolve in an instant the huge and baseless cosmogony of Hinduism, as, indeed, common sense may do; or the elaborate metaphysical cosmogonies and theogonies of the Phœnicians, the Zoroastrians, the Chinese, the Druids, the Scandinavians, the Egyptians, and the Grecians. Nor would modern cosmogonies fare any better, such as those of Whiston, and Burnet, and Granville Penn; and a score, it may be, of other world-makers, such as we may meet with every day and anywhere.

But, while the Bible does not present us with any dexterously constructed and plausibly argued cosmogony, it gives us in brief and plain terms a statement of facts which are found to be arranged in the most exact scientific manner, before there existed any science so to arrange them. This could not have been done by Moses from his own knowledge, or from his acquaintance with all the learning of the Egyptians, for that contained no such knowledge; but it could have been communicated to Moses or to Adam by revelation, as must have been done. For let it be observed, that the *method* of the Bible's statement is purely scientific, though not as science *discovers*, but as it *states its results*. Geology must begin by examining the *upper stratum first*, then the next, then the next, and so on, till it reach the greatest depth to which it can extend its researches. It then, in stating its ascertained results, places the *lowest stratum* or *unstratified nucleus first*, as the proper basis of all the rest, and arranges them in due ascertained order, each above the other, till it comes to the surface. Now, this could not have been done till but a few years ago by all the most accomplished geologists in the world; yet this is exactly what is done in the Bible, and could not have been so done otherwise than by a revelation given to man from the Creator of the world Himself. We receive the Bible history of creation, therefore, both as true in itself, regarded as the revealed historical narrative of the creation of the world,—such a narrative as was needed by, and specially suited to, Adam in his state of innocence,—equally suitable to be repeated by Moses as the proper commencement of the history of mankind;—and as so primarily and essentially true, that the nearest approaches which geological science shall ever be able to make to absolute geological truth, will only tend to explain and confirm the sublimely simple and profound Bible record.

The narrative of the *temptation and fall* has often been termed a manifest mythical statement, suggesting merely that the fall of man from his original innocence originated in his listening to the insinuating desires of his animal nature, and thereby sinking into a state of comparative degradation, as men are still so prone to do. But the Bible states it in direct terms as the plain narrative of an actual event, and without the slightest indication of its having, or being intended to have, a

mythical or allegorical meaning. We can expect no contemporaneous and corroborating record of an event that occurred at so early a period. But we do find, among the dim traditions of almost every ancient nation, certain statements about a serpent, and a guarded tree, and fatal consequences connected with, or resulting from, the serpent and the tree; and we also find some ancient sculptures representing a conflict between a serpent and a man, with the man treading upon the serpent's head, and the venomous reptile fixing its fangs in his heel. The kind of serpent-worship also, common to many ancient and half barbarous tribes, employed to appease or avert the anger of a malignant being represented by a serpent, seems to indicate the existence of a corrupt traditionary account of the temptation and fall of Adam. It is not easy to account for such almost universal traditionary narratives, fables, and idolatries, otherwise than by assuming them to have had their origin in some event which affected the whole human race; and the form which they assume bears a strong testimony to the historical character of the narrative in the Bible. It is evidently far more consistent with reason to receive the Bible account as a plain historical narrative of a marvellous and terrible event, than to discard it as a myth, containing, however, a principle, and find ourselves surrounded by many similar though distorted myths containing no similar principle.

We cannot pass by the significant intimations given of the early entrance of envy and murder into the human race; the separation of the race into two distinct classes,—one of them characterized by religious principles and conduct, the other by irreligion and devotedness to the arts and pleasures of life. That these intimations are historically true, we are in a manner constrained to admit, by their perfect agreement with what we see around us everywhere in human society still; so that, without any contemporaneous evidence, we cannot help saying, that if human nature was then the same as it is now, these events must have happened as they have been recorded. I may add, that some years ago, happening to engage in a somewhat prolonged and careful study of Egyptian antiquities and chronology, I was considerably surprised to find that one of their fabulous and mythological statements, bearing in its

bosom the marks of its having some relation to a very ancient religious contention, not only closely resembled the statement of the Bible, that in the days of Seth men began to call upon the name of the Lord,—or that the worshippers of Jehovah began then to assume a distinctive designation,—but also, that the mythologically stated Egyptian event was of the same date with the historically recorded Bible event. Perhaps it ought to be added, by way of explanation, that the fabulous Egyptian history and chronology, though reaching back to an antiquity far beyond the date of the flood, or even of the creation of Adam, makes no mention of either of these events, except, perhaps, in the mythological form of certain contentions between certain of their great deities. As the mythological and historical records of Egypt were entirely constructed by, and remained in the exclusive possession of, the priesthood; and as they wished to represent the antiquity of Egypt as immensely greater than that of any other nation, they would have found the deluge a troublesome event, and therefore they did not admit it into their records at all, although there are evidently some dim allusions to it and to antediluvian history.

The deluge is another great event, detailed with even peculiar exactness and precision in the Bible history. It is a remarkable fact, that there is no ancient nation, except Egypt alone, which does not possess among its oldest traditions, or even in its oldest history, some account of the deluge. These traditions or histories bear also such a resemblance to the Bible account, as to prove incontestably that they all refer to one and the same event. They all mention the preservation of a single individual and his family by means of a floating vessel, while all the rest of mankind perished; and they all claim that single individual as their own great ancestor. They all relate the resting of the ship, canoe, or ark on the summit of some great mountain, generally one in their own country or its vicinity; and the subsequent spread of mankind from that locality, as from a centre. Some of them mention the dove, as somehow connected with the ark; and some others connect the worship of a deity, half man, half fish, with the same event. These, or similar traditionary records, are found among the ancient Babylonians, the Assyrians; the Iranian race, or Bactrians,

Medes, Persians, and Armenians ; the Indo-Scythian race, or Hindus, Scythians of Northern Asia, Celts, Teutons or Germans, and Scandinavians ; and the Turanian race, or Mongolians and Tartars ; the Grecian tribes, the Romans, and even the Peruvians and Mexicans, if not also, as some say, among the South Sea Islanders.

Such a widespread or, rather, universal tradition, could not possibly have existed, if such an event had not taken place, and if all these races and nations had not derived their existence from one common ancestral family, and their tradition from that one common centre. Whether the whole earth was then as generally inhabited as it is now, and the deluge actually covered the whole earth ; or whether only a portion of the earth, a large district in central Asia, was inhabited, and that district so submerged as that its local deluge covered the whole of the portion inhabited by man,—are questions on which we do not think it necessary to express any definite opinion. It is evident, from the universality of the tradition and belief, that but one family escaped from its overwhelming waters, and that their descendants carried with them into every country under heaven some record of the terrible catastrophe. This is sufficient confirmation of the Bible history, as a true history of an event which really took place as recorded ; and when we compare these traditions with each other, and the whole with the Bible narrative, we cannot but perceive that they are all but imperfectly preserved traditions of that great event of which the Bible alone gives the true history. It would not be difficult to produce a very extensive and considerably minute confirmation of the account of the building of the tower of Babel, the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion and migration of nations throughout the chief known regions of the world ; but our limits do not permit us to indulge in matters of subordinate importance. For the same reason, we must refrain from tracing the history of Abraham, further than to mention that some of the recent discoveries among the ruins in Babylonia give the name of Chedorlaomer, the leader of that army which defeated the kings of Sodom and Gomorrha, and was routed by Abraham's night attack,—which is a new and unexpected corroboration of the Bible by contemporary monumental inscriptions ; proving also, at the same time, the existence of the art of making alpha-

betic and verbal inscriptions in the period of Abraham, with which he also was doubtless acquainted.

In all these narratives we find the same direct and unexaggerated statements of great public events, by which the Bible history is so peculiarly characterized; while we find that all contemporary records, even when they relate the same events, are full of wild, extravagant, and monstrous fictions, and expressed in pompously inflated language, or obscure, mystical, metaphorical, and sometimes metaphysical, terms. Already, therefore, this conclusion is evident, that while all other ancient traditionary records give history and fable inextricably intertwined, needing some simpler interpretation, the Bible alone gives us the clear and simple narrative of events expressed in the direct self-evident style of true history.

SEC. IV. COMPARISON BETWEEN SACRED AND PROFANE RECORDS.

We must prosecute a little further our examination of the historical character of the Bible, before stating a comparison between the sacred history and all other histories, usually termed profane, or, more properly, secular.

The residence of Abraham's descendants in Egypt, the tyrannical and cruel treatment they underwent, and their final departure from that land, or exodus, constitutes a purely historical epoch, and would require very careful study in order fully to apprehend its importance. This great event was in itself so remarkable, and attended or followed by such consequences, that it could not be concealed, even by the Egyptian priesthood, in their flattering national annals. Accordingly, they have recorded it in their own way, disfigured and misrepresented in such a manner as to reflect as little discredit on their own nation as possible; and although Josephus, the Jewish historian, set himself to answer and refute their fabulous and distorted record, it may be said that they were fortunate in an antagonist, who was not accustomed to, nor skilled in, the rigid analysis of exaggerated and misrepresented statements, by which their account might have been so completely set aside, and the Bible history confirmed. There is in the Bible history, *first*, a distinct enough intimation of a change

of dynasty in Egypt, when "a king arose, who knew not Joseph;" then a conflict, in which the religious elements were strongly called into exercise; and, finally, a great catastrophe, by which the power of Egypt was overthrown and smitten to a degree of prostration from which it never entirely recovered, although it made one or two convulsive struggles of brief duration at a considerably later period: these leading elements appear manifestly and prominently in the record itself, apart from all the miraculous statements which it contains. All these simply historical elements can be clearly proved by contemporaneous history; the main difference between them and the Bible consisting in this, that the narrative of the Bible is plain, perspicuous, and direct, and entirely free from all extravagance and confusion, such as those that disfigure and embarrass the Egyptian records. Everything appears perfectly credible, worthy of direct belief, in the Bible record, with the exception of the miraculous, which, nevertheless, is essential to the record; and though transcending all ordinary events, is in no respect contrary to reason, and is therefore, in its own position, also perfectly credible. But as the subject of miracles must soon come under special consideration, we reserve it for discussion in its proper place.

Returning to the history of the exodus, we wish to direct attention to this point, that there is a peculiar relation between that event and the earlier histories of Greece. Many of the Greek states avowedly derived their first germs of civilisation from either Phœnicia or Egypt, as we read of the Egyptian Danaus, and the Phœnician Cadmus; and the period to which all these migrations point is either identical, or almost identical, with that of the exodus. Now, we learn from the Mosaic narrative, that the Israelites did not leave Egypt alone, but that a "mixed multitude" accompanied them. This "mixed multitude" may be conjectured to have been composed very largely of those oppressed and injured Egyptians, and half enslaved natives of other countries, who took the opportunity of the breaking up of the tyrant's power, and hastened to escape, some accompanying the Israelites for a time, and others directing their course to the sea-coast of Palestine, and ultimately to the isles of Greece. But this is more than conjecture, as we have called it, and can be proved in very many instances, though

neither our space nor our design will permit us to produce the proof. We are entitled confidently to conclude, that the period of the exodus was actually a great historical epoch, and has left its stamp and impress both on Egypt itself, and on all countries contiguous to Egypt, and along the Mediterranean Sea.

Even the conquest of Palestine by Joshua has a close historical relation to some of the migrations of the Canaanitish and Phœnician races along the African shores of the Mediterranean, as can be proved by certain monuments and inscriptions in those regions. Recently also have the disinterred records of the early Assyrian empire been found to give the name of that ancient monarch who brought the Israelites into a state of servitude, in the beginning of the times of the Judges.

When we come to the times of David and Solomon, we find that we have entered the regions of known secular history, or at least into the dawn of the historic day. The chief event in Solomon's reign—the building of his magnificent temple—was evidently well known to all the then civilised world, and seems to have set the example of temple-building on a vast scale to all oriental nations. The wisdom of Solomon attracted universal attention and admiration, and became even proverbial throughout the East, although greatly mixed up with fables. At a later period, when the Hebrew people had corrupted their ways, and become ripe for judgment, the fame of their splendid and wealthy temple tended to draw towards them the avaricious desires of ambitious conquerors; till at length the mighty Babylonian monarch, Nebuchadnezzar, carried away its treasures as a rich spoil, to aid in adorning his own proud and imperial city. But by that very act, and the deportation of the chiefs of the Jews, there was introduced a new spirit into the history of the world,—a spirit which produced a kind of religious reformation almost universally. A mere collocation of dates will suffice to show at least the extreme probability of the statement:—

The Destruction of the Temple took place in	585 B.C.
Reformation of Religion in China by Confucius, about	550 „
Religious Revolution in India by the second Buddh,	540 „
Religious and Philosophical Views introduced into Greece by Pythagoras,	540 „
Great Religious Revolution in Persia by Zoroaster, about	520 „

These great changes in the religious systems of these great oriental nations, all of whom were more or less under the sway or influence of the almost universal Babylonian empire, can scarcely fail to suggest, that the deportation of the Jews to Babylon formed an epoch in the world's history, and gave an impulse preparatory for still greater events.

It was almost a necessary consequence of that impulse, that when the favour shown to the Jews by Alexander the Great, and his successors in Egypt, the Ptolemies, induced great numbers of Jews to settle in Alexandria, the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, and were thus introduced into the literature of the world. This event took place about the year 277 B.C.; and it might easily be shown how deeply the leading elements of the Hebrew Scriptures, from that time forward, pervaded the thoughtful mind of the world, and can be traced in the writings of the later Grecian philosophers. The history of the world was then manifestly undergoing a preparation for some great crisis, towards which it had long tended, and for which it was now nearly ready, in connection with the history of the Hebrew people.

That great crisis, "the fulness of the times," came at length. The ancient prediction of special blessing to Shem from the lips of Noah, the world's second father, was attached to Abraham the Hebrew, and to his promised seed; and he came into contact with Mesopotamians, Canaanites, and Egyptians. His race became dwellers in Egypt, but kept apart from the superstitious and haughty inhabitants, till the Egyptian monarch sought their destruction; they were protected, Egypt overthrown, and the chosen race set free. At a later period the Assyrian empire spread abroad its dominion westward, and was employed as the rod of God's displeasure, to chastise the rebellious and idolatrous Jews; but they exceeded their commission, blasphemed Israel's God, and perished utterly in His vengeance, and their supremacy was transferred to Babylon. In this event, as in that of the conflict with Egypt, the history of the world and that of Israel blend, and instruction relative to the true God and His moral government are given to man, if he would but learn it. The Babylonian sovereignty introduced a new element, on a grand scale, into the history of the world. Previous to that time all sovereignty was *patriarchal*, growing

out of the head of a family, retaining his position when that family became a tribe, and even when the tribe expanded into a nation. But the mighty Nebuchadnezzar, or at least his father Nabopolassar, was not of the Babylonian race; but seized on the ruins of the fallen Assyrian power, and, uniting it to the Babylonian, founded an empire whose very basis was *strength and force*, not patriarchal right. This new element of imperial sway was essentially a rebellion against the divine institution of patriarchal sovereignty; and the great world-power so established as a reign of violence, was symbolized by Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image, and by Daniel's vision of the four beasts. Ever since that time has the ruling world-power stood contrasted with, and more or less distinctly opposed to, the rule of rightful dominion, and of religious principle, but has always been brought into contact and collision with it, forming one history. Babylon carried away the people of Israel into captivity, heard, and might have learned, the songs of Zion, and then was overthrown. Persia rose on its ruins, seemed to be favourable to Israel for a season, but only strove to institute a rival religious system, as taught by Zoroaster, and fell before the might of the impetuous and intellectually energetic and far-seeing Macedonian. The successors of that greatest of conquerors repeatedly assailed the Jews, and one of them insolently profaned the temple, and persecuted the faithful of the Jews; and the stern, inflexible, iron will and power of republican Rome dashed their kingdoms to the earth, and trampled them beneath its feet. But Rome also came into contact with the Hebrew people, and established its proud dominion over them. It did so at a very peculiar juncture. The plain republican virtues of Rome had yielded under the influence of extreme prosperity, power, wealth, luxury, and corruption; and it had become a despotism, not essentially better than those which it had destroyed. The Hebrew nation had been completely rescued from that tendency to adopt idolatry, which had so frequently been their snare and their crime, and drawn down their punishment; but they had sunk into a state of balanced formalism and scepticism under the Pharisees and Sadducees, out of which all true religious principle had well-nigh been banished, and nothing but an empty name left behind—an unreal mockery of religious truth. It

seemed as if the world could do no more, and the chosen race had been worn out. All things had been long converging towards a centre; the world's history, and the history of the Jews had each been approaching their climax: they met, but each in an exhausted condition; were paralysed, and stood still. This was indeed the *great crisis*, "*the fulness of the times*."

But at that hour began a new series of events, which is still proceeding onward, and cannot end but with the end of time. A babe was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, of the line of David, as had been foretold. The history of His life, actions, and teaching was recorded by four of His immediate companions and followers; and the more full explanation, and statement, and application of His doctrines was written by others of them at the time, and has been transmitted to us. This sacred history of the life and doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ has been added to, and incorporated with, the sacred Hebrew history, constituting the one sacred record—the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments—THE BIBLE. This New Testament portion of it is not less closely and indissolubly linked to and interwoven with profane or secular history than is the Hebrew portion; with this difference in its behalf, that when the Gospel record was produced, the world had reached a higher degree of intellectual culture than it had attained in any previous age, could both observe and record facts more clearly than before, and could easily both produce and preserve true history. The secular history of that period actually records the leading facts on which Christianity is based, and thereby gives its testimony in behalf of the historical truth of the Gospel history. The records of the early ages of Christianity abound with historical facts, and come into contact with the secular histories of those times in points innumerable. The two classes of records, the sacred and the secular, may take very different views of things, and may express very different opinions concerning them, and yet agree substantially as to the facts themselves. The early Christians may, for example, record with censure the cruelty of their idolatrous persecutors, and applaud the faith and fortitude of the martyrs; while the heathens may write exultingly of their success in exterminating this new and perverse religious sect, this *superstitio exitiabilis*, and condemn, in severe terms, the wilful obstinacy of the

Christians; but, though strongly contrasted in their sentiments, they agree respecting the facts. Ever since that period, the Bible and the history of the world have been indissolubly blended together. The secular historian cannot give any intelligible account of the public affairs of any civilised country, without directing attention to the state of Christianity in that country. The writer of church history is equally constrained to record secular events, and show how these were either opposed to, or pervaded by, religious principles. It necessarily is, and will for ever be, impossible to deny *the fact that Christianity exists*; and it will never be possible to account for its existence on any other supposition than *its actual and absolute historical truth*.

We might now institute a comparison between the two kinds of historical records,—those that constitute the Bible, and those that constitute secular history. This appears to us scarcely necessary, after the outline already given in tracing and explaining the leading principles of historical evidence. A rapid and brief sketch, however, may be given, before quitting this department. We turn to the history of Egypt, towards which so much attention has of late been directed, in consequence of the discovery of a method by which the hieroglyphical inscriptions can be read. The discovery was made by a British scholar; but French and German scholars soon took the lead in prosecuting the investigation of those remains of remote antiquity, as was perhaps to be expected. Europe is, however, a republic of letters; and what is obtained by any one portion of it cannot long remain unknown to the rest. The investigation has been prosecuted with the utmost perseverance and learning by such almost universal scholars as Bunsen and Lepsius. And what has been the result of all their zealous and indefatigable labours? Little more than this: An absolute and utter failure to construct a history with reliable historical dates, and with the corroboration of contemporaneous annals, except in those portions of it where it comes into contact with Bible history, and receives a clear light, which it cannot even reflect. Bunsen designates his great work, *Egypt's Place in the World's History*; but in attempting to arrange Egyptian history into three great epochs, the middle one of these is of such a nature as to produce an impassable chasm

between it and the first epoch, of which first epoch he is himself constrained to say, that "it does not furnish even materials for a history." Those who are acquainted with German literature, and know out of what evanescent and unintelligible things a speculative German scholar can find materials for almost anything, may readily imagine how "dark, dark, unutterably dark" must be the region in which such an one can find no "materials for a history." But this learned and distinguished man makes a history, nevertheless, though destitute of any other materials than a list of names; and, while finding "Egypt's place in the world's history," encounters only this trifling difficulty, that in consequence of the extreme chronological antiquity of these unhistoric ages, he can find no world to place it in! How different is all this from the Bible! The Bible does not give us any formally constructed chronology; but it does give us a clear and simple narrative of events and men's lives, following each other in regular succession, and each with its own date, so that it requires no very elaborate process of arrangement and calculation to frame a chronology, the clear stream of historical truth having a sufficiency of marks along its margin to enable us to estimate its progress. By this brief comparison, we find the Bible history as far superior to that of ancient Egypt as light is to darkness, even Egyptian "darkness that might be felt."

Let us now betake ourselves to the histories of ancient Assyria and Babylon, to see whether their fulness, accuracy, and credibility may rival the Bible. Fragments, a few brief and obscure fragments, are all that remain to us in the form of historical and mythological legends, gathered up and preserved by the curiosity of the inquisitive Greeks. These few brief and obscure fragments do not deserve the name of history—scarcely even of "materials for history;" but they may be so used in connection with more complete and authentic history as to furnish some valuable hints. The fragments preserved by inquisitive Greeks give us some legends about Belus, and Ninus, and Semiramis; and then a silence of many centuries; and then a story about Sardanapalus, together with some legends about some very ancient changes in religion termed Scuthism, and Ionism, and Barbarism, with accompanying wars and convulsions; but what these religious changes

essentially were they cannot tell. But Greek poets find it possible to make some use of these ancient and obscure legends; and we obtain poetic records about Saturn and his three sons; about the wars of the Titans; about the war of the Giants; and about the ultimate division of the universe, the heavens, the ocean, and the invisible world of the dead, between their three great deities, Zeus, Posīdon, and Pluto. Yet, while in these legends we perceive fable, and fiction, and poetic embellishment, we can also trace dimly the basis of facts on which they ultimately rest, and may recognise the lineaments of persons with whom we are otherwise acquainted. We can perceive in these fabulous legends a resemblance to the narratives of the Bible, intimating an early contest among the descendants of Noah and his sons, and the rise of different forms of false or perverted religion; and in Saturn and his three sons we cannot fail to perceive Noah and his three sons, and the ultimate division of the world among their descendants. While, therefore, these brief and obscure fragments and poetic legends cannot themselves form history, they can, and do to some extent, corroborate the statements of Bible history, which, on the other hand, explains what these fabulous legends partly intimate and partly conceal under the folds of mythological garniture.

Recent discoveries, indeed, in Mesopotamia and Babylonia have cast a flood of light on many of these ancient and hitherto dim and obscure historical legends; and we may hope that further researches and discoveries will render them still more clearly intelligible. We have now some monumental and reliable records of the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian monarchies, and a tolerably complete account of the more modern Assyrian monarchy, when it became the assailant of the Hebrew nation, as the Bible relates; and from these we obtain ample and unsuspected testimony to the truth of the Bible, as contemporaneous history. Yet after all, and with the advantage of these modern discoveries, the slightest consideration bestowed on the subject by an intelligent, fair, and candid mind will be amply sufficient to prove that the records of the Bible are immeasurably superior, as history, to all the legends that have been preserved, and all the monuments that have been discovered, relating to these ancient nations.

We are quite willing to bring our comparison between the

Bible and secular history to the most searching and decisive test that can be imagined. Let us prove it against the best and most thoroughly authenticated histories of Greece, or Rome, or France, or Britain. In any one of these instances, if we try to trace back the history to its very origin, we shall find nothing but some vague intimations of a race emerging out of the gloom of the pre-historic period ; but we shall not find it possible to obtain anything on which we can confidently rely as to its actual origin, and the events that preceded that vague emerging appearance. Who, for example, can tell anything definite about the ancient Pelasgi,—whether they were actually the first inhabitants of Greece, or only a second or third immigration from some other country ? One modern author would have us to believe that Greece received its first inhabitants from the mountainous regions of Hindu-Cush, or about Cashmere, or somewhere near the sources of the Indus, and that these earliest settlers spoke Sanscrit, and left names to the mountains, rivers, bays, and capes of Greece, which have intelligible meanings in the Sanscrit language, but none in that of the subsequent Greek-speaking people, who must therefore have been an entirely different race. How little do we know of Greece before the war of Troy,—nay, how little even then ! We have not more than enough to enable us to believe that there actually was such a war, and that it left the stamp and impress of itself on the character of the Greek people in the important idea of federal combination, along with the separate independence of the federate states,—the very idea by means of which Greece was enabled so long to maintain her own freedom, and to teach the great lessons of liberty to all the world. Or, we may ask, who can tell us anything very definite or intelligent about the ancient Etrurians, Oscans, Sabines, and Umbrians, or even about the Romans themselves ? Niebuhr has succeeded in dispelling the beautiful and romantic legends of which Livy and other historians make so much use, resolving them into ballad-poems, for which we can scarcely thank him, even though Macaulay has reproduced them in stirring strains of English poetry. But, historically speaking, we have no such authentic account of the ancient inhabitants of Italy as can be properly termed history,—nothing that will bear any comparison with the his-

tory of the family and race of Abraham. Even in the later histories of Rome we find many discordant accounts, and such evident partiality in these accounts, that we cannot receive them with implicit belief. But there is no such partiality or onesidedness in the Bible. The errors, faults, or even crimes, of prominent men, and even of the nation, are mentioned and condemned with as much impartiality and severity as are the evil deeds of the individuals or the nations with whom they came into contact. This alone gives to the Bible history a character of truthfulness inestimably higher than belongs to any other history in the world. Perhaps, some may think, we may expect to find a great amount of credibility in the history of Britain. Of Britain! Why, its origin is a perfect mass, a tissue, of fables. Whence sprang the British race? Was it at first a race of giants, who were subdued and destroyed by a colony of Trojans led by a chief named Brutus, whose name, somewhat distorted, gave a name to the whole island? Are we to believe that Scotland was peopled by a colony from Egypt led by Scota, daughter of one of the ancient Pharaohs; and that she brought with her the stone on which Jacob rested his head when he slept in the desert, and had his marvellous dream; and that it became the coronation stone of forty kings before the time of Fergus? Or must we content ourselves with being at first a race of Celts, who came to this country no one knows when, and from no one knows where; and who, after a succession of invasions by Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, became at length the fused and blended confluence of strong races, constituting the mighty British nation?


Were we inclined, or did we think it necessary, to prosecute this line of comparison between the Bible and other histories further, we could easily show, that not only in the more ancient elements all other histories are immeasurably inferior to it in trustworthiness, but that even, with reference to the histories of events that have occurred in Europe within the last 1000 or 500, or even 300 years, the Bible history, from the times of Moses downward, when it became and continued to be a national history, is, beyond all comparison, more worthy of credit than are any such histories, the general veracity of which, nevertheless, no sane person doubts. We do not, therefore, hesitate to say, that the person who may affect to

doubt the truth of the Bible history, even as history, ought to begin by refusing to believe any and every history of any and every nation in the world, and of any and every period of time past; for there never can be any history of past events more fully confirmed by all the principles of historical evidence, than is the history of the world and of the Hebrew people as recorded in the Bible.

We have, in this department, intentionally refrained from dealing with the accounts of miraculous events recorded in Scripture, because the argument from miracles requires special and separate discussion; and to that part of the subject we have next to direct our attention.

CHAPTER III.

MIRACLES.

HE importance of the subject on which we are about to enter demands a few preliminary observations. Our deductions from Natural Theology seemed sufficient to enable us to hold that a supernatural revelation was both *possible* and *probable*, and to lay us under an imperative moral obligation to give all diligent and conscientious attention to the various kinds of evidence that might be produced by any moral and religious system that *claimed to be a revelation*. THE BIBLE makes that claim with open and unhesitating boldness; and we have been engaged in the duty of investigating briefly whether its historical pretensions were in accordance with the principles of historical evidence. The result of this investigation has been, that we have arrived at the conclusion that the Bible, even as history, is more amply substantiated and proved by clear, full, circumstantial, contemporaneous, and coherent historical evidence than any other historical record, ancient or modern, in the world, and has a right to demand not less than that belief which we readily give to documents far less amply proved. But if we admit, and cannot rationally deny, the historical truthfulness of the Bible, we must be aware that, as it claims to *be*, and to *contain*, a supernatural revelation, and states other evidence in proof of the supernatural character of that revelation, we are morally bound also to examine that preferred evidence, and have indeed already pledged ourselves to do so, by admitting its historical veracity.

The value of establishing the historical veracity of the Bible will appear from this consideration, that we are thereby constrained to pay attention to all the statements contained in it, and may not set them aside as mere fabulous accounts transmitted vaguely from a dark and superstitious age, which so many are inclined to do, but which our previous historical dis-

quisition has rendered impossible. We have a right to demand a fair and even a favourable consideration of every statement contained in the Bible, in virtue of its proved historical veracity, as we would of the statements of a witness of good character.

The Bible contains and proclaims a revelation from God to man, and states the accompanying proofs that it is from God. In this it does as a sovereign would do, in sending an ambassador to a foreign court, or to a distant part of his own dominions: he would not only instruct the ambassador what message to deliver, but would also furnish him with such credentials as should prove the *right* he had to bear the character of an ambassador from his sovereign,—he would impress on his commission, the *broad seal of the state*. Now, this is precisely the relation that miracles bear to the doctrinal statements of the Bible. Miracles are *not* intended to prove the truth of a doctrine, but to draw attention to and confirm the *authority and credibility of the teachers*,—they are his credentials, they are the *broad seal of heaven's Eternal King*. The value of this distinction will appear as we advance in our disquisition.

SEC. I. MIRACLES : DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION.

There are only *two* ways in which we can conceive of a revelation as given to man. The one of these would be the direct communication of that revelation to every individual by whom it was needed, that is, a separate revelation to every individual of the entire human race; the other would be a revelation given directly to a competent number of trustworthy persons, with a commission and command to them to communicate this revelation to others. The former of these methods God has not adopted, doubtless for wise and sufficient reasons, whether we may be able to apprehend them or not. One reason we think we can apprehend; and it seems sufficient. It is this: Such an individual revelation would have been inconsistent with the nature which God has given to man, weakening the representative character and social union of the human community. By such a revelation each individual would have been rendered independent of every other, and comparative dissociation would have taken place, so far as regards the highest element of human nature; while, in all other respects, relating to his inferior and merely physical nature, there would have remained, or seemed

to remain, the representative and consociating elements. There could not have been mutual instruction, mutual sympathy, mutual encouragement, or any of the innumerable tender and endearing forms of religious intercourse between believers, which now render Christianity the element of highest social union.

But God adopted the latter method. He gave a direct revelation of Himself, of His character and laws, and of the divine remedial measure by means of which it was His good pleasure at once to vindicate His own character and laws, and to provide salvation for lost man; commanding them to communicate this revelation to others; and promising to prove their authority, as commissioned by Him, with adequate credentials. Now, the idea of such credentials inevitably implies, that they should be such as to prove that they were furnished by *God Himself*, and by *God alone*. There must be some sign which could not be counterfeited—something by means of which God should manifest Himself, as attesting the character of His ambassadors. The only ways in which we can conceive this to be done are these two,—by the manifestation of *infinite power*, or the manifestation of *infinite knowledge*; that is, by means of *miracles*, or by means of *prophecy*, or of both. Some are inclined to include these under the one term, miracles, as they would term the manifestation of infinite power a miracle of power, and the manifestation of infinite knowledge a miracle of knowledge. There is truth in this; but we prefer such an arrangement as may limit the application of the term *miracle* to the manifestation of *infinite power*, and leave the term *prophecy* to the manifestation of *infinite knowledge*, for the sake of the clearness and simplicity of arrangement thereby obtained. Let it be remembered, that we have already proved that a supernatural revelation is both *possible* and *probable*; and if so, there is necessarily as much possibility and probability that miracles would be wrought to furnish the requisite credentials. We do not, it should be remarked, doubt or deny that a revelation from God may be expected to have *internal evidence* of its divine origin, and that this evidence will be sufficient for the soul that is in a right state to receive it. But the vast majority of mankind are *not* in a right mental and moral condition to perceive the value of the internal evidence of revelation, from their ignorance or immorality, or both, and

need to have their attention aroused and arrested by some *appeal to their senses*, something *open to all*, and *level to the capacity of all*. For this reason, doubtless, God has been pleased to grant miracles, as the needed external evidence and best proof for the establishment of a supernatural revelation. To this it may be added, that as God is Himself invisible, He must make Himself known by His visible works; and for a special purpose may be expected to make Himself known by a *special external work*, that is, *by a miracle*.

What is a miracle? A great deal may depend on the answer to this important question,—or the *definition of a miracle*. If the definition of a miracle contain too much, it may allow the introduction of a fallacy into the superfluous part of the definition, and a conclusion may be drawn from it injurious to the whole argument. If it contain too little, it may leave us unable to apply the argument where it ought to be applied. The definition should neither be redundant nor defective, in order to enable us to draw the right conclusion and obtain the full benefit of the argument from miracles. Various definitions of miracles have been given, some of the chief of which we may transcribe. “A miracle,” says Dr. Samuel Clarke, “is a work effected in a manner unusual, or different from the common and regular method of Providence, by the interposition of God Himself, or of some intelligent agent superior to man, for the proof or evidence of some particular doctrine, or in attestation of the authority of some particular person.” Hartwell Horne says, “A miracle is an effect or event contrary to the established constitution of things, or a sensible suspension or controlment of, or deviation from, the known laws of nature, wrought either by the immediate act, or by the assistance, or by the permission, of God, and accompanied with a previous notice or declaration that it is performed according to the purpose and by the power of God, for the proof or evidence of some particular doctrine, or in attestation of the authority or divine mission of some particular person.” Dr. Wardlaw gives a much briefer definition, in these words: “A miracle is a work, a fact, or an event, involving a temporary suspension of the known laws of nature, or a deviation from the established institution and fixed order of the universe.” By many, miracles have been defined to be “acts contrary to the course of nature, violations

or suspensions of nature's laws." David Hume, in producing his argument against the credibility of miracles, gives the following very brief definition—very suitable to his purpose: "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature."

Before proceeding further, it seems expedient, and may be found useful, to offer some remarks on these definitions; which are only a selection from many more that might have been produced. The definitions given by Dr. Clarke and Hartwell Horne seem to me to include too much. They both imply that a miracle may be wrought by some power superhuman—perhaps supernatural should be the word,—“by some intelligent agent superior to man,” says Clarke; “by the assistance or by the permission of God,” says Horne, but not, necessarily, by God Himself. These definitions would leave room not only for the agency of unfallen angelic beings, but also for the agency of Satan and his legions; and would thus involve us in the difficult and dangerous necessity of seeking some criterion by which we might determine, in any given case, whether the miracle had been wrought by a devil, an unfallen angel, or God Himself; or it might involve us in the fallacy of reasoning in a circle, and attempting to prove the reality of the miracle by the truth of the doctrine, and the truth of the doctrine by the reality of the miracle. But, as we shall attempt to show very soon, there is no need to embarrass ourselves by any such inquiry; for in the definition of a miracle there is no necessity of including the possibility of the agency of any merely superhuman beings, and, indeed, any such agency cannot properly be included. For since it cannot be imagined that God would leave the laws of His providential government of the world to be used by any subordinate beings—angels or demons—at their pleasure,—as that would be equivalent to His abdication of the direct government of the universe,—we must hold, that even if they should be employed as agents, it would be at His command; and their agency would still be His, and would be rightly ascribed to Him. Every true miracle, therefore, must be such that we can say of it, “*God alone was its Author.*” In one point we regard these definitions as too limited. When they say, “for the proof or evidence of some particular doctrine, or in attestation of the authority of some particular person,” they exclude several scriptural miracles. No *particular doctrine* was proved, for

example, when the sun stood still at Joshua's command; nor was it necessary to attest his authority, which had been both amply attested and thoroughly recognised some time before. The miracles of judgment on the Egyptians, wrought by Moses in that country, had more in view evidently, than the proving of his doctrine and commission; for they so weakened the power of Egypt, while punishing its iniquity, as to procure deliverance to the children of Israel.

There is a more pernicious element in the definition given by Hume, and not only given by him, but actually current, and generally received at the time. For if it be admitted that *a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature*, then not only is an opening given for the use of Hume's sophistical objection to the fullest extent that he could desire, but every one instinctively feels that an unpleasant character has been given to miracles, by representing them as violations of the established and generally beneficial laws of nature. Such a definition may seem also to suggest, that there is something like self-contradiction in the view thereby given of Himself by God to man. When we regard the laws of nature as the modes of action by which God at first constructed, and still guides and rules, the world, we are prepared to expect *invariable uniformity in their operation*; both because they are the modes of action of the unchangeable God, and because, their operation being generally beneficial, we dread anything like change, as at once apparently contrary to God's character, and threatening confusion or caprice, instead of steady, balanced, benevolent, invariable uniformity. For these and other reasons, we strongly disapprove of any such definition of miracles as would represent them as a "violation of the laws of nature." Even Dr. Wardlaw's definition, though very guarded, seems to us somewhat liable to the same kind of objection: "A work, fact, or event, involving a temporary suspension of the known laws of nature, or a deviation from the established constitution and fixed order of the universe." It is in the last clause that the danger seems to lie: "a deviation from the established constitution and fixed order of the universe." These terms appear to us to be much too comprehensive—to assume a knowledge of the "established constitution and fixed order," not only of our world, and what comes under our own observation, but "of the universe," such as not only no man, but no created

being, can possibly possess. Dr. Wardlaw's own mode of prosecuting the investigation of the subject of miracles led him into a course of argument, which was at least a virtual contradiction of his own definition, when he argued, that as the moral world was more important than the physical, if there should occur in the moral world any reason why there should be, for the advantage of the moral world, a temporary suspension of the known laws of nature, such a suspension would be only a higher conformity with the laws of the moral world; and therefore, we would add, no deviation from the constitution and fixed order of the universe. The *argument* we regard as decidedly more in conformity with the truth of the matter than the *definition*.

Let us now attempt to investigate the subject of miracles as closely as we can, in the hope of obtaining such a view and conception of their true nature and design, as may enable us to give a definition of them, not liable to the preceding objections. Let it be observed, then, first of all, that *creation* is necessarily the *first miracle*; and that, therefore, we may rightly term *creation a miraculous manifestation of God*. This is the view given by Scripture itself: "The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Creation, therefore, manifests God, not only in His power, but also in His wisdom and goodness. The *laws of creation*, as we term them, are *manifestations of His attributes*. In our study of the *laws of nature*, if our minds are duly intelligent and enlightened, we are studying the *manifestations of the divine attributes*. So far as we apprehend and understand this, we cannot be surprised at their uniformity, but might well be greatly surprised if they were not uniform in their wise and benevolent operation. The laws of nature are not liable to violation by the interposition of any created being, because they are the modes by means of which the unchangeable God governs the universe, and manifests His own unchangeableness. No created being can possibly suspend the laws of nature, or cause any deviation from their established constitution, far less cause a direct violation of them; because *every created being is but a part of nature*, and is itself subject to the laws which God appointed and maintains. All the laws and sequences of nature are what they are, because God, the sole Author and sovereign

Ruler of nature, appointed and maintains them in steady uniformity, operating invariably according to His own supreme will. We cannot, therefore, admit any definition of a miracle which would even seem to leave the laws of nature subject to the temporary invasion and suspension of their uniformity by any created being whatever; for that would be to admit that a creature can assume the prerogative of God.

Does this seem to argue that no miracle is possible? By no means. It only argues that it is not possible for any being but God. Resuming our previous position in the inquiry, let us bear in mind, that *creation* is the *first miracle*, and that it is *a manifestation of God*, and that the *laws of nature* are *manifestations of the attributes of God*, so far, that is, as His attributes can be manifested by a material universe. But we can readily apprehend that God can make new and further manifestations of Himself, especially of His *moral character*. Such manifestations would be *new miracles*. Every true miracle would therefore be *a new manifestation of God*. And as God is essentially invisible, while His power and Godhead are manifested in the visible creation, we might expect that the visible creation would be required to bear testimony to the new manifestation, in order to prove that *its Creator* was the *Author of the new manifestation*. Further, when we take *man* and his *moral nature* into consideration, we are warranted to conclude, that creation was designed for the manifestation of the glory of God, and for the welfare of His *rational and moral creature, man*.

Redemption, or the *new creation*, is the *second* great miracle, as creation was the *first*. This *new creation* does no violence to the *first*; but while it repairs its ruin caused by man's sin, and does so by creating man anew "in righteousness and true holiness," it introduces such new and moral manifestations of God, accompanied by such attestations from nature, as prove the Author of *redemption* to be also the Author of *creation*. For the sake of drawing attention to this new moral and spiritual creation, and to the messengers who proclaim it on God's authority, *God Himself interposes, anticipating, suspending, or transcendently surpassing the ordinary and known laws of nature*, but in no instance violating those wise, beneficial, and uniformly operating laws. We thus arrive at a conclusion from which it may be possible to construct a definition of

miracles, which may include all that is necessary, and not be liable to the objections already stated, or open to the cavils of the sophist.

Let us again ask the question, *What is a miracle?* and now attempt to give a duly comprehensive and guarded answer. *A miracle is a sudden effect produced without the operation of known causes, by the direct intervention of divine power, anticipating, suspending, or transcendently surpassing the ordinary and known laws and sequences of nature.* The words of Nicodemus addressed to Christ seem to us to imply all this, though he could not at that time have formed so full and absolute an idea of miraculous intervention: "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles which Thou doest, except God be with him." It was from God, and from God only, that Nicodemus thought the power of working miracles could come; and he thought rightly, as we venture also to think. Very evidently, he held that miracles did prove the intervention, and consequently the approbation, of God; and therefore he thought that the person who possessed such heavenly credentials, had authority to speak on heavenly subjects, and ought to be believed on the strength of that authority. According to his view, no direct and special miracle was needed for the purpose of establishing the truth of any particular doctrine; but as this divinely accredited messenger (Jesus) bore so manifestly the broad seal of God, He was to be believed in any heavenly message He might utter, on the strength of the general attestation of the miracles which He wrought. And let this be well noted: *Christ admitted the argument and its conclusion*, as proving that He was a teacher come from God.

Some explanation of our definition, however, may be of advantage; and we proceed to give it briefly. The term "sudden effect" is necessary, in order to restrict our attention to the proper condition of a miracle. For, if we were to suppose that any lengthened period intervened between the word of power and the miraculous event, it would not be possible, in many instances, to prevent the suspicion arising, that some intermediate means might have been used, sufficient to account for the event. By the words, "without the operation of *known* causes," we cut off, as far as is necessary, all that is known of physical causation; but we do not mean to exclude the idea of

the invisible and unknown operation of the *Great First Cause Himself*. On the contrary, as we regard every true miracle as a *new creation*; and as creation was not the result of the operation of known causes, but the direct and immediate *effect* of which *God* was the direct and immediate *cause*; so we regard the miracle as produced without the operation of known causes. Further, as creation could not be in violation of the laws of nature—for there was previously no *nature* in existence to have laws,—so a miracle cannot be a violation of the laws of nature, for it is a *new creation*; and though it takes place without the operation of *nature's ordinary laws*, it will be found to be in conformity with the first creation, and by anticipation with its laws.

Again, when we say, “by the direct intervention of divine power,” we not only avoid the dangerous hypothetical admission that created powers may produce miracles, and thus impair the value of a miracle as a *divine attestation*, but we also keep our views regarding the manifestation of the divine attributes in the laws of nature free from the embarrassment which any other view would produce. And, still regarding a miracle as a new creation, we direct our attention all the more to the *Creator Himself* in the miracle thus wrought; and may be led to perceive, in *its moral character*, a manifestation of *His moral character* which the ordinary laws of physical nature had not so clearly given. And, finally, when we say, “anticipating, suspending, or transcendently surpassing the ordinary and known laws and sequences of nature,” we state, or suggest, all that is necessary, and all that Scripture implies in the numerous miracles which it records. We have in our explanations repeatedly spoken of a *true miracle* as a *new creation*; and we did so, in the use of the language which Scripture affords, and of the ideas which it suggests: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” Many similar expressions exist in Scripture, and will occur to every one. The great idea is this: *Redemption* is a *new creation*; but not by the actual production of something *absolutely new*,—rather by “the renewing of the whole man after the image of God”—by the Holy Spirit. A true miracle is a new creation in the same sense. The present creation is renewed and restored from its ruined state. Every miracle takes some portion of nature as it is, and anticipates what might be its slow production. Water can become wine,

by the slow process of being elaborated through the sap-vessels, fruit, and fermentation of the wine; but the miracle anticipates the process, and changes suddenly, by divine power, the water into wine. Every defect in the human frame, and even death itself, will be removed by the resurrection, which, however, will be the *last visible miracle*; but all the anticipating miracles either suspend the destructive agencies, or transcendently surpass all beneficial agencies in such a manner as to manifest the creative power of God in the restorative miracle. The *first creation*, with the subsequently established *laws of nature*, was the *primitive manifestation* of the *being, power, and attributes of God*. *Redemption*, or the *new creation*, with its *laws, or miracles*, is the *second manifestation of GOD, through the SON, and by the SPIRIT*, and chiefly of *His moral character and attributes*, as displayed in *love, grace, mercy, and peace*. This *new creation* calls on all the manifestations of the *former* to bear miraculous testimony to the presence of its Creator and God in this His finishing work.

This definition of a miracle, rightly and fully understood as thus explained, will be found, we trust, not only to be free from the captious objections usually brought forward by sophistical opponents, but also to be in complete accordance with the moral and spiritual character of the divinely instituted gospel plan and creative work of redemption, and will even tend to explain, illustrate, and enforce some of its peculiar doctrines,—such as the doctrines of regeneration, sanctification, and eternal life.

SEC. II. THE POSSIBILITY AND CREDIBILITY OF MIRACLES.

The defender of revelation is, in every age, exposed to this disadvantage, that while the assailant may choose what point he may think it most prudent to assail, the defender has no such absolute freedom of choice, but must defend the point assailed. In former ages the conflict frequently raged round the outer bulwarks only. In our age the citadel itself is often the point attacked. For example, in the case of the argument from miracles, the opponent of the Bible is bold enough now to say: “You need not produce any such argument to me. I regard miracles as absolutely impossible; and therefore I can pay no attention to an argument which assumes an impossibility in its

very premiss. Nay, to tell you the plain truth, I reject the Bible very much because it contains so much of the miraculous; and at all events, I reject every part of it in which mention is made of miracles." We are thus compelled, before we can proceed, to meet this bold objection, and to prove the possibility of miracles.

We have been constrained, in another part of our course, to direct our attention to some of the metaphysical speculations prevalent in Germany; and again we are constrained to revisit that region of something like Cimmerian gloom. A few sentences will be necessary to make the darkness visible. It has been proved that a supernatural revelation is necessary, because man is a fallen and sinful creature, and by that fall has lost his original intercourse with the holy God. But the very fact that man is a fallen creature, is a fact which man is unwilling to admit; and this unwillingness to admit the fact of the fall renders him equally unwilling to admit the supernatural revelation, which in all its declarations presupposes or asserts the fall and sin. Mankind would, without much reluctance, receive a *moral teacher*; but, denying their moral depravity, they claim the right to subject all his moral teaching to the judgment of their own moral faculty, as if that faculty were still in its state of original purity and power, and as if it were itself the standard of right and wrong. A man whose mind is very strongly bent on inward moral contemplations may, or rather must, feel powerfully attracted by the moral precepts of the gospel, and by the moral purity and elevation of the character of Jesus. Silent, solitary, contemplative meditation becomes the habitual condition of his mind. He dislikes to be engaged with the active duties of life; and he feels something like disregard for the historical portions of the Bible, and turns away from all kinds of internal evidence, expressing his decided preference for the moral, the spiritual, the divine truths of revelation. He becomes, in short, a *mystic*; and in a little time he pays comparatively little attention to the work of Christ *for him*, but delights to dwell on what he perhaps terms "the Christ *in him*." This mystical tendency may become Pietism in some cases, Quakerism in others, Swedenborgianism in others, and what we may term Spiritualism in others; but in all cases it sets aside a large portion of the Scriptures as not suited to its own special predilections, and

thus elevates itself above Scripture. This mystical tendency can perfectly consist with Popery ; for while it claims something like infallibility for its own inward emotional feelings, it can readily admit the idea of an infallible church.

But this mysticism prepares the human mind for another and a more pernicious condition of revolt against the supremacy of Scripture. Some bold and vigorous system of philosophy may arise, cast, it may be, in a strongly logical mould, and determined to compress everything into the forms and categories of the logical understanding. It will not submit to think that there can be anything beyond its sphere of knowledge and modes of *knowing* ; and as mysticism has already set aside all that is not easily compatible with its states of *feeling*, so this logical philosophy sets aside all that may appear inconsistent with its modes of *knowing*. This is *Rationalism*. What we have termed the *logical understanding*, these philosophers term *reason*—not, as we think, very appropriately, for many of its conclusions seem most irrational,—and they claim for this boasted *reason* the right of judging and setting aside everything which cannot be comprised within its forms of conception. It was on the assumed supremacy of this kind of reason that the late Dr. Paulus, of Heidelberg, set himself boldly to the task of explaining away all the miracles of Scripture, all its prophecies, and, in short, everything in the Bible that *his* reason could not comprehend. “But they are miracles,” it might have been said to him, “and therefore you cannot expect fully to comprehend them.” “That is the very reason,” he might have replied, “why I explain them away. If I cannot comprehend them, I cannot believe them ; and if I can comprehend them, they are not miracles. Now, as I wish to retain my belief generally in the Bible, I feel at liberty to explain, in a manner consistent with my reason, every statement contained in the Bible, that I may be able to believe it as a whole.”

Well, then, let us hear some of these explanations of rationalism. What can be said as to the miracle of feeding the five thousand with five loaves ? “The influence of Jesus over the multitude was very great, and that multitude was itself very variously constituted : some were poor, and had no food ; others were rich, and had plenty with them, as they were probably on their journey to Jerusalem. When they saw Jesus so disinterestedly and generously dividing His small store among the

destitute, those who also had spare provisions could not help following His example; and so there was enough among them for all." But how, then, could Jesus appeal to that event, in reproof of the want of faith in His disciples, if there were nothing in it more marvellous than rationalism allows? Let us try another instance. What can be said as to the resurrection of Jesus Himself? "That requires a little more explanation; but still it can be explained. There can be no doubt that Jesus was in a very exhausted state, and deeply depressed in mind, when He was seized, and subjected both to a harassing trial and to scourging. The consequence was, that He fainted on the cross and appeared to be dead, while the malefactors were still manifestly alive. In this deep syncope *He* was hurriedly placed in the tomb, without suffering the violence necessary to kill *them*. A severe thunder-storm, accompanied by an earthquake, occurred during the night, causing the guard to seek shelter for a short period. During that period some of His disciples came to the place, and finding the tomb opened by the earthquake, and Jesus Himself somewhat revived, they carried Him away; and He, abundantly warned by the sufferings He had so recently endured, withdrew from Jerusalem altogether, first into Galilee, and afterwards into some more remote residence, and was no more seen in public. And this was all."

But what of the pierced heart? What of the stern discipline exercised on Roman soldiers who fled from their post on duty? What of the united testimony of all the disciples afterwards, in maintenance of the truth of which they were ready to suffer imprisonment, stripes, and death? "Why, we may suppose that they saw some kind of vision, as they thought, and that they were men of heated and enthusiastic dispositions, and so endured a species of martyrdom, as enthusiasts have often done." Most rational! Let us ask yet one other question: Can the miraculous deaths of Ananias and Sapphira be explained? "Very easily. The idea of the community of goods was a grand idea for the apostles, and put a great central and controlling power into their hands, of which they were very ready to avail themselves. But the conduct of Ananias was fitted to put all this in peril, if others should follow his example. The clear perception of this peril roused the anger of the irascible and hasty Peter; and he, in a moment of fierce passion,

stabbed Ananias to the heart, and afterwards confirmed the act by inflicting a similar punishment upon Sapphira." How very rational! Numbers saw the deed, and could not but regard it as an act of murder, if the explanation of the rationalist be admitted. Yet not one of them informed the authorities, to screen themselves from being punished as participators in the crime; and not one of them repudiated the fictitious account of the transaction when it was afterwards made public. Rationalism must have an immense power of credulity, if it can really believe its own most irrational explanation of miracles. Why not employ that credulity in believing the miracles themselves? Because, to do so, would be to submit reason to the Bible; and they are determined to make the Bible submit to reason, however absurd and unreasonable be its explanations.

The rationalism of Paulus, however, may be regarded as nearly extinct, even in the land of its nativity. But a more skilfully constructed rationalism soon arose in the country so prolific in speculative thought, and has not yet completed its round of existence. This deeper rationalism may be said to have been originated by Schleiermacher. This remarkable man was at once deeply imbued with the Platonic philosophy, and with the spiritualistic emotional feelings of mysticism. To these he added the notion, that *clearness* was the criterion of truth. Platonism is not, indeed, very *clear* to many minds; nor is mysticism. But when a man *feels* very strongly, as Schleiermacher did, he commonly imagines that he also *sees clearly* the strong emotion, arrogating the prerogative of reason. Thus it was with him; and between his thoughts and his emotions he produced the compound state of mind termed "*the religious consciousness*." This very high state of mind, as its admirers regard it, lays claim to a power not inferior to what may be meant by inspiration. It accepts the "historic Christ," and the "Christian fact," to use its own language; because by its own strength it can elevate itself to the height of religious truth, and there obtain commanding possession of all that is necessary to salvation—of all that constitutes true religion. But why should it now continue in the region of mere doctrines and dogmatic statements, adapted well enough, perhaps, to a lower state of religious development? It has got possession, in its own religious consciousness, of the person of a true,

spiritual, indwelling Christ, and has thus a testimony within itself which can not only dispense with all other testimony—all external testimony,—but can determine as to the value of all external testimony, all Scripture, all history, all miracles; and may judge revelation itself, receiving or rejecting at pleasure. This also is a rationalism; only it is a much more refined rationalism than that of Paulus, and therefore much more dangerous. It would not condescend to give such rude and even vulgar explanations as Paulus gave; but it is as little inclined to adopt the simple scriptural statement as direct truth, and therefore it has to frame explanations more in accordance with what it deems its own higher and purer position and consciousness.

This rationalism of the religious consciousness gives rise to the vague theory of myths. By the theory of myths is meant something closely akin to the method of teaching by parables. According to that theory, when we accept the one historic fact of the “historic Christ,” and fairly master what that fact means, we have all the amount of fact—“Christian fact”—that rational Christianity really needs. We have been made to know the grand truth and principle of all religion. We have seen “a strong Son of God” making willing sacrifice of Himself and all His inclinations to the will of God, and thus setting us an example, by following which we may become sons of God ourselves; and, in like manner, “the Christ in us” may work out our salvation. It was when the early disciples had learned this, that they began to write gospels and epistles. But it was not necessary that these should be a record of actual facts; it was quite enough that they should be a parabolic or mythic embodiment of religious truths. And as the “historic Christ” had taught religious truths by means of parables, it was quite to be expected that His disciples should follow the example of their revered Master. Further, nothing could be more natural than that, in framing these parables, or mythic representations and embodiments of religious truth, they should connect them all with the name of a Master so revered and beloved. In this manner the Gospels were gradually constructed; and are not to be regarded as historical narratives at all, but as a series of mythic representations of religious truths and principles. Without denying, therefore, the actual existence of the “historic Christ,” very small indeed is the portion

of historic truth to be found in the Gospels. It might even be said, on this theory, that the Christ of the Gospels was gradually constructed by means of Christian myths, rather than that Christ Himself constructed Christianity. This form of rationalism was carried to its extreme by the notorious *Strauss*; but its very extravagance both roused a host of antagonists, and caused a speedy recoil. It destroyed, indeed, in a great measure, the ruder rationalism of *Paulus*; but, while it did so, it did it by assuming a more subtle and even a supernatural theory, which might seem plausible to mystics, perhaps to the weaker class of subjective philosophers, yet could not produce any positive and permanent faith.

I have thought it right to give a condensed view of these phases of German rationalism, and even to be somewhat more minute in explaining their sources and their nature than I think they intrinsically deserve; because it will be necessary to refer to them again, when we come to treat of the great subject of inspiration; and the more we know of them now, and the better we understand them, the fitter shall we be to deal with them when we meet them on another field of conflict.

Rationalism, in all its phases, denies not only the truth of miracles, but also the *possibility*; and this it does, because, in all its phases, it places reason above revelation, and claims that reason must decide what is to be received as revelation. Man may, indeed, accept revelation as a whole; but wherever there appears to be a conflict between revelation and the conceptions of human reason, reason must have the supremacy. This is *rationalism*,—whether in the mystic phase, trusting in its own internal spiritual and emotional illumination; or in the coarse, rude explanations of the vulgar rationalism of Paulus and his followers; or in the mythic theory of Strauss and his followers. And as miracles have been generally defined to be “violations of the known laws of nature,” or “contrary to the known laws of nature,” or something to that effect, it will follow, that they must seem incompatible with the conceptions of human reason, which has come to regard the laws of nature as uniform and invariable; and, therefore, human reason rejects the miracles. The phase of rationalism represented by Paulus will boldly assume the sophistical argument of Hume, as if it had not long ago been answered and demolished, and, on the strength of that argument, affirm that miracles are impossible. As we

mean to deal with Hume's argument by itself, we shall, for the present, leave that form of objection unanswered.

But the mystic and mythic phases of rationalism demand a different kind of reply; and to that we now address ourselves. Let it be remembered, as we have formerly stated, that we have already obtained ample proof of some important elements in the discussion, which rationalism would not willingly grant, but cannot now deny. We know that there is an infinite, personal God,—wise, benevolent, true, and righteous. We know that He created both the world in which we dwell and the human soul, and that in the human soul He placed the high faculty of conscience, to pronounce authoritatively on the subject of right and wrong, good and evil, and to appeal to God Himself for the ratification and enforcement of its decisions. We know that the human soul, and this its supreme faculty, intuitively feel remorse, and are haunted by the dread of future punishment. We know that an anxious longing for, and dim anticipation of, a supernatural revelation from God, have in all ages pervaded all mankind. We know, finally, that there is a book which claims to be such a revelation; and that, tried severely by the principles of historical evidence, that book, the Bible, is, beyond all comparison, more certainly and indubitably true than any other history in all the world. And yet that book, the Bible, records these miracles, contains them interwoven with its undeniably true historical narratives; and that, too, not as mere supernatural wonders, but as attestations by God Himself, vouchsafed by Him as credentials to His ambassadors,—proofs that the world and the Bible are the productions of the same God. Is there not, then, in all this already proved knowledge, an *essential possibility* given to the record of miracles, and therefore to the miracles themselves? This is the ground on which we are entitled to compel rationalism to meet us.

If rationalism do try to meet us on this ground, it will soon be constrained to admit that the mythic theory is itself *an incredible myth*; nay more, that it is inconsistent with proved historic truth. It can be proved, for example, although we do not here relate the proof, that some of the Gospel histories were written within a few years after the time of Christ's crucifixion, and while all the events recorded in it were still within the vivid recollection of living thousands. The Gospel by Matthew

was written, some say, within eight years of that date, or ten, more probably; and it abounds in these miraculous narratives. Why did not the Jews, the bitter enemies of Christianity, at once disprove the truth of these narratives, and thus put Christianity to the silent shame of a detested imposture? Because all Jerusalem, Judea, and Galilee knew that these narratives recorded only the exact and simple truth. Not one of the ancient opponents of Christianity ever ventured to dispute the facts recorded in these marvellous miracles; and yet this would have been by far the most influential mode of opposing Christianity. Why did they all admit these facts? It will not avail the rationalist to say that it was a dark and superstitious age; for it was the most enlightened and the least superstitious age the world had ever seen—the celebrated Augustan age. The mythic rationalist says that the full history of Christ was the growth of Christianity. It is far more true to say that mythic rationalism is the growth of scepticism—its monstrous efflorescence, in its last stage of decay.

Many recent historical inquiries and discoveries have so confirmed the historical truth of Christianity, that few now venture to maintain the mythic theory in Germany,—not even Strauss himself. A few half-educated British infidels yet make a fashion of pretending to hold it; but they are so few and uninfluential as scarcely to deserve any notice. The British mind, when opposed to Christianity, demands some more substantial ground on which to rest its opposition, and falls back on British deism, deeming it wiser to hold an evasive encounter with Paley. But German rationalism, and a small section of its followers in Britain, quitting the historic ground and the mythic theory, attempt to argue the point somewhat metaphysically on the ground of the *subjective philosophy*. “We know nothing,” say they, “directly and absolutely, but our own consciousness; and we neither do know, nor can know, anything about eternal nature, except according to our own forms of perception and laws of thought. But our perceptions all give us an idea that the laws of nature are uniform, constant, invariable, and absolutely unchanging and unchangeable. With this idea our own thoughts fully agree. This is nature—all nature—to us. We never had, and cannot have, any idea of the supernatural, or the contra-natural. It would be simply the unnatural, or the non-natural, and therefore the

unintelligible to us, for we have no means of knowing anything about it. And as miracles, by their very definition, belong to some such region as the supernatural or the contra-natural, they cannot come within either our perceptions or our thoughts, and can never be either proved or even shown to be probable, —nay, are not even possible to us. We might call miracles either incredible or unintelligible; but to put an end to the matter, we term them *impossible*. And we use this term in preference to any other; because, if we were to admit the idea of miracles, as you define them, we should regard that as an admission that God could contradict Himself; and this, surely, is impossible." Such is the argument which those rationalists who have some little acquaintance with at least the language of subjective philosophy, attempt to use.

But a true and sound subjective philosophy teaches more than such an objection implies. It teaches us that our consciousness reveals a *moral nature* within each man and all men; that the moral faculty, or *conscience*, which is the essence of our moral nature, comes at all points and moments into contest with the *will*, and claims a right to command it—a right so supreme, that it will not submit to be questioned either by the *will*, or by the *speculative reason*; that, however, some dire *miracle of evil*, contrary alike to the laws of external nature and of the moral world within,—a miracle of which we cannot conceive either the *origin* or the *cause*,—*has actually taken place*, disturbing the entire moral world alike in the individual and in society, and throwing the whole into confusion, misrule, and anarchy; that as this is not in harmony with what either our *à priori* thinking or our *à posteriori* reasoning led us to conclude regarding our own moral will and consciousness, our true personality, or the personality of God, there seems to be reason to hope that God may, by means of some counteracting *miracle of good*, provide a remedy for this great moral disease, rescue man from this sore evil, and restore him to his former condition, and to the lost favour of his Creator and God. "This implies a miracle," says our opponent; "and I have already said I cannot admit a miracle to be possible." But you admit that *moral evil exists*, we reply, and that it causes *physical evil*, in many ways among mankind. Is not that admitting a *miracle*,—a manifest contradiction to the laws of nature,—to the laws of your own moral nature,—to the laws of God? Surely it is

not more impossible to admit a *remedial miracle* than a *destructive one* ! “ But I refer to physical miracles,” he replies. Well, we rejoin, you will admit that creation is a miracle—a physical miracle. “ I cannot say that,” he answers, “ for there is but one creation ; and we cannot reason from one instance.” You err again, we reply, for geology has revealed to us many creations—not less, certainly, than *six*, each with its distinct character of form, physical structure, and living creature ; so that physical science itself proves creations to be possible,—that is, *proves miracles to be possible*.

Further still, a knowledge of subjective philosophy should have taught that the appearances and proofs of *design*, both in external nature, and in the adaptations to our own mental and moral nature which they display so profusely, are ample proofs that the physical is so constituted as to subserve the use and promote the welfare of the mental and moral. And as our own will possesses the power of making changes in physical nature, when prompted and permitted by our moral faculty, is it not perfectly consistent with even subjective philosophy, which taught this, to admit that the will of the Creator can also produce physical changes, when these tend to promote the moral welfare of the creature for whose use they were created ? Subjective philosophy itself, then, when rightly and adequately understood, tends to prove, at least, that such supernatural changes as we term *miracles* are not only possible, but may be expected, when they are necessary to promote the moral welfare of the moral creature, man, for whose moral good they were all intended and instituted, seeing that man is now suffering under the *antagonist miracle* of *moral evil*.

All the miracles of the Bible are in perfect harmony with such a conclusion, for they have all a moral meaning and a moral bearing, so as even to teach moral truth, while bearing testimony to the intervention of the moral and personal God. And the definition which we have given, while it does not contain any such element as that of “ *violating the laws of nature*,” on which so many captious objections have been fastened, gives, we are persuaded, the true view of miracles, and will enable us to show, not only that they are both *possible* and *probable*, but that they are highly *reasonable*, so far as unprejudiced and candid reason can descry, and lead us into

those loftiest regions open only to the clear eye of true spiritual and enlightened faith, when in God's light it clearly sees light.

SEC. III. THE MORAL CHARACTER AND ASPECT OF MIRACLES.

Having in the preceding section disposed, somewhat satisfactorily we hope, of the modern objection against the *possibility* of miracles, we now return to the more direct course of our present disquisition regarding them. We now direct our attention to the *moral character and aspect of miracles*. It will be remembered that both our definition, and our brief explanations of its terms, tended to introduce the idea of the *moral character and aspect of miracles* in a somewhat peculiar manner. *Creation itself* was termed the *first miracle*, as a *manifestation of the Creator*, chiefly in regard to what are sometimes termed His *natural attributes*, or the attributes of power, wisdom, and goodness. In all these respects we must regard the Creator as Himself above nature, calling nature into existence, giving constitution, law, and order to nature. Now, it is by no means unreasonable to think, that beyond and above these visible manifestations of "His eternal power and Godhead," there may be *moral and spiritual attributes* which could not be manifested to any but moral and spiritual beings, because such beings only possess the faculties to which such attributes are addressed, and by which they are understood. In what manner such manifestations may be made to creatures who, while moral and spiritual, are not physical, we may not be able to determine, or to know; but, so far from regarding that as impossible, we habitually think that such spiritual beings must have more direct communion with God than creatures of a physical nature can, even though also moral and spiritual. It is always prudent for us not to be presumptuous, nor to think ourselves "wise above what is written;" and therefore we shall not venture to give any opinion relative to how angelic beings can receive and apprehend communications from their Creator. But, restricting our considerations to the more limited regions of physical nature and man, as more within our proper cognisance, it seems to us highly reasonable to suppose that nature and its laws would be employed as the most suitable medium of communication between God and man. To the *first man*, all nature—above him,

around him, beneath him, within him,—was one vast, complex miracle; the skies, the woods, waters, and animals around, the earth beneath, the warm emotions of his own inner being,—all these were strange and wonderful to him; and must have excited a strong desire to know what they were, what he himself was, and what all meant and manifested. The *great miracle of nature*, therefore, had what we may term a natural tendency to induce man to long for and expect some higher manifestation of that *power* to which nature owed its existence. The *first revelation* was the proper answer to this longing and expectation. Referring to a previous section, in which this idea was explained and applied at some length, we proceed with the inference.

This illustration suggests the proper use of a *miracle*, and its relation at once to the physical and the moral world. Its direct use is the same as the direct use of the physical universe is, namely, to suggest the power, wisdom, and goodness of the infinite Being by whom it was called into existence. But this it could do only to a rational and moral creature, such as man, who could at once apprehend design, manifesting power and wisdom, and the benevolence of that design, manifesting goodness. We infer, therefore, that the highest design of the Creator must have been the manifestation of Himself, not to *Himself* certainly, as some modern subjective philosophers seem to think; but to rational and moral creatures, whom He had created and rendered capable of their highest happiness in this manifestation of their Creator. Further, man's perception of the uniformity and invariableness of nature's laws and sequences, so soon as his perception and experience enabled him to entertain that idea, would necessarily suggest to him the unchangeableness of the Creator; and the attribute thus manifested and apprehended would lead him to repose the most implicit confidence in the continued goodness of God. No such idea as that of a blind materialistic fatalism could thus arise.

But let us now suppose that some sudden change took place, not in accordance with the uniformity of nature's common and ordinary sequences; to what kind of thought might this give rise in the mind of man? Assuming man to be still unfallen and sinless, the only thought to which it could give rise would be the thought that the Creator was again manifesting His power

and wisdom, and, doubtless, for some good end. It would seem to him, that the invisible God was giving visible manifestation of His presence, and that for some high moral purpose. If it were by *anticipating* the laws of nature, *that* was but in accordance with the *act of creation itself*; with what must have been his own creation,—though he could not directly know *it*;—with the special creation of his help-meet, Eve, of which he was dimly conscious; and, therefore, he would regard it as a new creation. If it were by *suspending* the laws of nature, so as to cause the appearance of some effect which their common operation would not have produced, it was still in accordance with what might be expected, that nature should pause, when the Creator Himself interposed to manifest His direct power, especially if some evidently moral effect was produced. And if it were by *transcendently surpassing* anything that the laws of nature could produce, it would be so much the more a manifestation of the Divine Creator's almighty power. The very abeyance of every natural law, in such instances, would seem the appropriate and awe-struck reverential silence and submissive obedience of nature in the manifested presence of her Creator, all second causes being suspended during the direct action of the First Cause. And in all such instances it would be in exact accordance with the rational moral nature of man, that he should expect to find either a moral element in the miracle, or a moral consequence resulting from it; and if such an element or consequence appeared, he would inevitably regard that moral element or result as the *end* which the miracle had been wrought to accomplish, and as, therefore, in the highest harmony with the highest design of nature, and a new and special manifestation of God. It would still be a miracle, but in no respect either apparently impossible or incredible.

Or if we suppose the case of sinful man,—with which, of course, we are most intimately acquainted, and in reference to which nearly all the miracles recorded in the Bible were wrought,—we shall find our view not refuted or controverted, but confirmed. The very idea of sin, or sinful man, implies that *moral evil* has come into the world, into the human soul itself. We might term the existence of sin *a miracle of evil*, in the sense of its being something “contrary to the known laws of nature,” or “in violation of the laws of nature;” and if this should lead us also to conclude that it was “in viola-

tion of the laws of God," we should certainly conclude rightly, so far as this conclusion could carry us. We should not, however, be thereby much the nearer to an explanation of the *origin of evil*, in its abstract idea. But when we were led painfully to feel that moral evil was invariably followed, and even punished, by physical evil; feeling *that* moral evil in our own inner being, miserable in our contending against it, and more miserable still in yielding to it; seeing all nature around us steadily and uniformly obeying its laws, and mournfully conscious that we are not obeying the high moral laws of our nature,—might we not most rationally hope that our Creator would interpose for our deliverance, and that, if He did, He would manifest the same character and attributes which He had impressed so legibly on nature, with this special characteristic, that as His interposition was now for the purpose of remedying our moral malady, it should bear a moral nature and aspect still more manifestly than even creation itself had done? In every miracle we might expect to find the manifestation of creative power, constraining nature itself to bear testimony to the presence of its invisible Lord, in the deed done without the operation of known causes, and in some manner far transcending their operation; and we might expect to perceive great and eternal moral principles characterizing all these miraculous interpositions, so far as we were enabled to perceive and understand their nature and meaning. Such manifestations of Himself in miracles of power, wisdom, goodness, and morally remedial interposition, are precisely what fallen and sinful man most needs, and what, if God should interpose, we might expect the merciful and gracious God to grant.

Even the miracles of judgment which Scripture relates manifest the same moral character and aspect, and teach similar moral principles. The dread judgment of the flood came not till the earth was filled with corruption and violence, when, while it was morally necessary that God should vindicate His moral government by the infliction of due punishment, it was, perhaps, almost a deliverance for the human race to perish at once by an overwhelming deluge, rather than to suffer daily from the lawless violence of remorseless fellow-creatures. The overthrow of the cities of the plain presents a similar moral character. That miracle was not merely a miracle of

power, but of moral retribution. The horrible and unnatural atrocity so habitually perpetrated by the inhabitants of these cities, was fitted to draw down what even human moral principles must call merited condemnation; so that, while their destruction was a miracle of power, it was also an instance of righteous judgment, in punishing such hideous criminality. Again, the plagues inflicted on Egypt have also a moral character and aspect, both in relation to the punishment which the Egyptians deserved, on account of their ungrateful and tyrannical oppression and cruelty to the children of Israel, the kindred of their great benefactor, Joseph; and also with regard to their gross and monstrous idolatry, and open defiance of Jehovah, even in His alternations of judgment and mercy. The many miracles wrought among the Israelites themselves, both in the time of Moses and in subsequent times, were all of a moral character,—either punishing them for rebellion and sin, or promoting their deliverance, and fulfilling God's promises to them. Every one of those miracles, in short, had its own moral character and moral meaning in addition to the relation in which it stood to those messengers of God, who were at once accredited by it, as sent by God, and employed to teach those truths which were necessary for the restoration of their moral nature. It would be easy to trace and point out the inherent moral character and aspect of all the miracles recorded in the Old Testament; but we refrain, deeming what has been done quite enough to explain our meaning.

That the miracles of the New Testament have all a moral character and aspect, is so obvious, that it requires little more than to be stated. They are almost all miracles of healing, and manifest clearly in their very statement the compassionate and gracious character of the Lord Jesus Christ. In some instances He Himself intimates their moral character, by connecting the saying to a paralytic man, for example, "Rise up and walk," with "Thy sins are forgiven thee." In one instance a miracle of judgment is recorded, when Jesus pronounced the words of power which withered up the fig-tree; but the whole tenor of the narrative shows that this was a symbolical event. The fig-tree, which bore leaves, but not fruit, was an apt emblem of the Hebrew people at that very time, with their profuse pharisaical profession, and their utterly heartless and ungodly character; the sudden withering away

of the tree symbolized the rapidly approaching condemnation and destruction of a nation and polity so barren of fruit unto holiness and God. There was in this event, therefore, a peculiarly significant moral character, of a symbolical kind, such as those symbolical prophetic acts with which their history abounds. Among the miracles recorded as wrought by the disciples, there are two of a similar character, that is, two that relate to judgment. The first of these is the case of Ananias and Sapphira. A little thought will suffice to show the profoundly moral character of this miracle of judgment. There were manifest indications of a strong excitement among the people, in consequence of the great miracle of the pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit, and its effects on the apostles. Numbers hastened too readily to join them, and to express a belief in the Lord Jesus. The infant church might have been crowded at once with enthusiasts and hypocrites, if God had not adopted some method of constraining men to examine and judge themselves, before making a declaration of their faith. The sudden impulse which led them to form a community of goods supplied the form of a test of their sincerity, in their present circumstances. This test Ananias and his wife could not stand. They wished to obtain the reputation of zeal and liberality, but they could not make the needed pecuniary sacrifice. They kept back part, and pretended they had given all. They were under the constraint of no law commanding them to give *all*, or even *any*, of their property; and might, therefore, have retained all, or any proportion they chose. Why should they give any? Because this would make it appear as if they were full of the Holy Spirit, and thus impelled to do the liberal self-denying deed. This pretence—this hypocritical and false pretence—was indeed, as Peter termed it, “lying not to man only, but unto the Holy Spirit.” The miracle of judgment that followed was a solemn and awful warning against hypocrisy and falsehood, for all hypocrisy is “lying unto God.”

The case of Elymas the sorcerer was somewhat similar, though fitted to meet a different state of matters. This man was one of those who pretended to the possession of some miraculous or magic power in connection with the prevalent idolatry. He was, therefore, a direct opponent of Christianity, on the pretence that he could himself produce proofs of his intercourse with those false gods which he thus strove to per-

suade others to worship. When he thus withstood and opposed Paul openly, and in the presence of a public magistrate, who seemed disposed to believe the gospel, his conduct assumed the character of a challenge of power between himself and Paul, or, rather, between his false gods and the God of salvation. This was publicly met by Paul; and the miracle of sudden blindness which fell upon him at the utterance of Paul's words, while it was judgment to him, was mercy to the deputy, and to all who saw the miracle, and might be led the more to listen to Paul preaching Christ. It was ample and direct proof, that the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom Paul preached, was mightier than the false gods of the sorcerer, and was, by this miracle, bearing testimony to Paul as His authorized messenger. And when we direct attention to the words, "Thou shalt be blind for a season," we are led to think that his blindness was not intended to be perpetual, and would be removed should he repent: this was mercy in judgment.

We have directed a considerable amount of attention to the moral character and aspect of miracles, both because we regard that point as one of great importance, and because it places us in a position, as we apprehend, in which we can deal very directly and conclusively with a question which has often proved troublesome to those who have occasion to discuss the subject of Christian evidences. The question is sometimes put thus: What relation is there between the truth of a miracle and the truth of the doctrine in support of which it is performed? The difficulty which meets the theological apologist arises mainly out of the defective definition commonly given of miracles. When we say that a miracle is produced "by the direct intervention of divine power," we lay ourselves open to the objection of some, "that it does appear *ultra vires* on the part of man to affirm of every miracle, that, because a miracle, it must proceed from the immediate finger or fiat of God;"—"for aught we know, God may have permitted the exercise of a power of making invasion on the laws of visible nature to the angels or the archangels who are beneath Him." Now, notwithstanding the great name of him from whom we have quoted these words, we venture to retain our definition, and to deny the power of any creature "to make invasion on the laws of visible nature." The difficulty which prevents many, and prevented Dr. Chalmers among others, from venturing to deny

to angels or demons the power of working miracles, is, that such a power seemed to be ascribed to them in the Scriptures; and that, therefore, to deny that power to them would involve the necessity of explaining away those passages in Scripture which seem to record it. Dr. Chalmers, however, admits that there is an opposite and counteracting difficulty involved in believing that inferior powers may work miracles. For, if a devil can work a miracle, as in attestation of some false doctrine which *his* messenger may be commissioned to teach, then the fact of a miracle being wrought in attestation of the doctrine could be no sure proof that the doctrine was true. Some have tried to obviate this difficulty, by arguing that no miracle can prove any doctrine to be true, unless that doctrine itself neither contradicts any known truth nor any universal principle of morality. It is objected to this, that it involves the fallacy of reasoning in a circle; first proving the miracle to have come from God by the doctrine, and then the doctrine to have come from Him by the miracle. This objection, which seems to us a valid one, Dr. Chalmers attempts to meet, by calling into action a previous natural religion, having its source and strength in the supremacy of conscience; and this he seems to think strong enough to establish such general principles of morality as would enable us to say, that any miracle wrought in favour of a contrary and manifestly immoral doctrine could not have been wrought by God, but must have been the work of the devil, and ought to be rejected; and this, he thinks, sets aside the objection, "that such a test is a fallacy."

His argument is plausible, but not sound or satisfactory, as we think. For let it be observed, that he takes us back into the region of Natural Theology. Now, in that region we can learn nothing whatever about angels or demons. All that we do know about such beings is simply what we have learned from Scripture, and not from Natural Theology. From Natural Theology we may learn not a little regarding both God and ourselves, as well as regarding the laws of nature. We learn clearly enough that we cannot change or modify the laws of nature; and as we also learn to regard mere physical nature as entirely unconscious, and law as essentially residing in mind, we conclude that the laws of nature are the modes of action which the Divine Mind has prescribed to Himself. Further, Natural Theology teaches us that this Divine Mind is a personal

God, having moral consciousness and will; and that, therefore, if there be any adequate moral end requiring His intervention, there is every reason to expect that He may will so to intervene, —which intervention would be a miracle. But while Natural Theology has given us this amount of most important information, it has told us nothing about angels or demons, nor given us the least reason to think that such beings may exist, and may have power to invade and violate the laws of visible nature. We do not think, therefore, that Natural Theology can be legitimately introduced, as Dr. Chalmers attempted to introduce it; consequently we hold the objection of fallacious reasoning in a circle valid.

The difficulty in which so many involve the argument from miracles, arises, we are persuaded, from their not having formed a right conception of what a true miracle really is, and given that conception in a clear and adequate yet succinct definition. Every miracle must necessarily appear to us to be a fact or event produced without or above the operation of known causes. Even this first and simplest view excludes all known causes, and, so far as we continue in the sphere of Natural Theology, excludes all superhuman agencies, except that of God Himself, for in that sphere we know of no superhuman agent but God only. Further, the miracle *must be in that region primarily*, because its very object is to be a sign to unbelievers, and it must therefore be such as they can apprehend. Now, while these considerations show that all known natural causes *must* be excluded, they necessarily include the one known and adequate supernatural cause, God; and this is not only sufficient for the argument, but it is *the* argument itself.

Again, when we say that every miracle is caused “by the direct intervention of divine power,” we not only ascribe it to a known and adequate cause—the only cause at once adequate and known, GOD,—we also escape entirely out of the various entangling sophistries by which we might otherwise be embarrassed. At the same time, and by means of the same clause in our definition, we introduce the idea of a true and absolute morality into the miracle. For as God is the true and absolute moral and personal Author of all that is true and moral, every miracle or work performed directly by Him must be truly moral. With such an idea of a miracle in our minds, we can never be involved in the meshes of reasoning in a circle, and

trying to prove the miracle by the doctrine, and the doctrine by the miracle, since both contain divine and true morality. We did not introduce into our definition any such expression as "for a moral purpose," or "in proof of a doctrine," or "in attestation of some particular person," because any such expression would tend to limit the application of the definition, or even tend to its misapplication; while the clause "by the direct intervention of divine power" includes all that is necessary, and renders the definition universally applicable in the right sense.

There is yet another point which should be clearly apprehended with regard to the argument from miracles—a point which many definitions and many arguments show to have been misapprehended. It is this: A miracle is not designed to prove, nor even competent to prove, the *truth* of a *doctrine*, because there is no necessary connection between power and truth,—so that the manifestation of power has nothing to do with truth; nor have miracles, true miracles, ever been wrought for the purpose of proving a truth. What a real miracle is designed to prove, and what alone it is in its own nature competent to prove, is, not the truth of the doctrine, but the *divine commission of the teacher of that doctrine*. This is precisely what Nicodemus meant, when he said, "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man could do those miracles which Thou doest, except God were with him." The messenger declares to us that he has a message to us from God. This of course proceeds upon the assumption, admitted on both sides, that there is a God. We ask him how we are to know that he is sent from God to teach us. He makes an open and solemn appeal to the one only living and true God, and asks Him to bear testimony to the fact that he is a messenger come from God, by working openly and instantly some work of superhuman power. The miracle is wrought. The messenger has thus produced his credentials. Now we listen, and he delivers his message. In such an instance—and we might term it a normal one—the right arrangement,—the miracle was wrought by the direct intervention of God Himself, in answer to the appeal of His ambassador, and to prove the divine commission which he has received, *before* the deliverance of his message, before the teaching of any doctrine. We then believe the doctrine, because God, by the miracle which

He wrought, has visibly pledged His veracity to the fact that the messenger has come from Him, has His authority, and is to be believed in what he teaches simply and absolutely on that authority. The *power* was the *manifestation of God*; but the *truth* of the *doctrine* rests on the *veracity of God* as speaking by the messenger who has thus displayed those credentials, which prove that he has come from God, and bears His message.

It will also appear evident, we think, to every clear and close-thinking mind, that it is only as a teacher come to instruct us in something *new* that any man can need, or even with propriety appeal to, miracles in proof of his divine commission. Why should a divine commission be issued to teach us what we already know? Miracles must, therefore, have always a prospective bearing. Christ and His disciples did not work miracles in proof of the Mosaic dispensation, though they often appealed to its doctrines, as already known and admitted; but they wrought miracles in proof of their *divine commission to promulgate the gospel*. When the disciples were made to know that the gospel was to be preached *to all nations*, Gentiles as well as Jews, they received a specially new miraculous proof of the commission in this new and extended aspect of it, and thereby were enabled to go forward beyond their former limited views and limited boundaries. When no *new doctrine* is to be promulgated, no *new commission* requires to be given, and no *new miracles* are to be expected. This principle we shall have to mention again, and to apply more fully and specifically, when we come to consider the *cessation of miracles*—a subject to which it is very closely related.

The views which we have thus given regarding the essentially moral character and aspect of miracles, will be found to be in perfect accordance with the manifest character of all the miracles recorded in Scripture; and while they may aid in removing many of the difficulties which have been allowed to gather round and cling to the argument unnecessarily, in consequence of misconceptions and erroneous or defective definitions, we venture to hope that they may aid in rendering the true meaning of the Scripture miracles more apparent to some than they have been, both in their own study of the Bible, and in their teaching of others. It was with that intention, and in that hope, that we have endeavoured to produce a course of explanation considerably new, venturing to dispute the argu-

ments of some whose judgment we respect, and whose memory we revere.

SEC. IV. THE CONDITION AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF TRUE MIRACLES.

The truth of a miracle,—that is, the certainty that it did actually take place as it has been recorded, and that it was actually a real event of superhuman power, and not a mere counterfeit,—may generally and adequately be proved by a clear account of the condition and circumstances connected with it, and attending it, or the character of those, or of him, by whom it was wrought, and the circumstances of time, place, and manner in which it was performed and recorded. The treatment of this subject will not lead us into any very recondite inquiries, or involve any abstract arguments; but it may prove both interesting and instructive, and may furnish occasion for meeting and refuting some objections, and for placing the character of true miracles in clear contrast with counterfeits.

According to the view which we have taken, and deliberately hold, respecting miracles, they were intended to mark, and do clearly mark, the interposition of God Himself; and thus are the proper credentials of a messenger sent from Him. But credentials must be sufficient to prove themselves, otherwise they would need other proof, and would not really be credentials. There must, therefore, be some marks, or *criteria*, by which a true miracle can be truly known to be a miracle,—so distinct, clear, and specific, that they cannot be found combined in the case of anything which is not a true miracle. Let us state such criteria:—

1. An event or fact, purporting to be miraculous, *must have in view some result or object to be accomplished, worthy of God*. For there is no probability that God would interpose His almighty power directly, and suspend the laws of nature, for some frivolous purpose, unworthy of Himself. But if the design of a miracle is to bear testimony to a messenger sent from God to the world, to proclaim a new method of intercourse between God and man, fitted to vindicate the divine glory and secure man's salvation, such a design is every way worthy of God's direct interposition.

2. *It must be instantaneously and publicly performed, in the presence of credible witnesses.* This criterion includes both the nature and the condition of a true miracle. For, since a miracle is a divine interposition, it must bear the creative character. Nature works slowly, gradually, by means of second causes, and does not create, but unfolds. But divine agency excludes second causes; for the First Cause is Himself at work, and the effect must be instantaneous. Publicity and the presence of credible witnesses are also necessary. If done “in a corner,” with very few even said to be present, and they liable to the suspicion of having some interest in the matter, strong doubt might be entertained that it was not a real, but only a pretended, miracle.

3. *The miracle must be of such a kind that the senses of mankind—sight, hearing, touch—can rightly and fully judge of it, both that it is real, and that it is supernatural.* There is more importance due to this criterion than at first sight may appear. But let this point be taken into full consideration, that there may be, and are, many powers or forces in nature with which we are yet but imperfectly acquainted, and with which many men in early ages and in all countries were not acquainted at all. Modern science has enabled us to do many things which to the ancient world would certainly have seemed miraculous. In unenlightened lands, or among uneducated people, these might seem miraculous still. Some chemical combinations and their results would seem miraculous in such lands, or among such people. But a true miracle does not thus take its position among the arcana of physical science, and there work mystic wonders. It appears on the broad and open platform of common nature, and makes its bold appeal to the common senses and perceptions of mankind. When the waters of a mighty and fertilizing river are turned into blood; when water gushes plentifully from a rough granite rock; when thousands are fed by a few loaves; when a man who has lain four days in the grave is raised from the dead,—there can be no deception: our ordinary senses are competent judges, and to them the appeal is openly made.

4. *A miracle must be independent of second causes.* This criterion, indeed, is included in the very definition of a miracle—“an effect produced without the operation of known causes.” All natural events spring from, and are dependent on, natural

causes. It may not always be easy to trace the mediate connection of the cause with the effect, but it is always in our power to trace some relation. In medical cases we may not be able to trace the precise process by which the disease is alleviated or removed, but we do know that the medicines employed bear some peculiar affinity to the disease, and so counteract its tendency as to aid in the restoration of health. Miracles have no such relation. Nothing visibly intervenes between the words, "Rise and walk," and the uprising and walking of the man previously shrivelled up with paralysis. In the two or three instances in which Jesus did seem to use some external means, as, in making a clayey ointment, and with it anointing the eyes of the blind man, the external act bore no relation whatever to the event; but it was fitted to arouse the man's attention, and to call forth his faith in Jesus Himself, since, without faith in Jesus, the act would have seemed insulting mockery.

5. In miracles of a peculiarly public and national character, another criterion presents itself, namely: *Not only public monuments must be set up, but some outward actions must also be constantly performed, in memory of the facts thus publicly wrought.*

6. To that may be added a sixth criterion of a similar nature. Such monuments must be set up, and such actions and observances must be instituted, *at the very time when those events took place, and be afterwards continued without interruption.* When we specially conjoin these two rules together, as we are entitled to do, on account of their public and national character, we cannot but perceive their peculiar value as criteria. For they render it impossible that the belief of any facts should be imposed upon the credulity of after-ages, when the generation said to have witnessed them had passed away; since, whenever such facts came to be recounted, if not only monuments of them are said still to remain, but also it is asserted that public actions and observances have been constantly used to commemorate them by the nation appealed to, ever since they had taken place, while yet there were no such monuments known to exist, and no individual in the nation had ever taken part in any such observances,—the falseness of the assertion could not but be at once detected; and the appeal was more likely to call forth indignant derision, than to induce any measure of belief.

Now, all these criteria combine in attesting the reality of the miracles recorded in Scripture, particularly in the case of those miracles that have a national and historical character; and it must be added, that they do not, and cannot, combine in support of any such public and historical event which is not an actual truth. With some slight alterations, in abridgment or addition, they are taken from Leslie's *Short and Easy Way with Deists*—a little work which never has been, and, we may safely say, never can be answered. One well-known deist acknowledged, that after spending twenty years in the attempt to find one single instance in which these criteria could be found combining in support of an imposture or fiction, he was compelled to abandon the attempt, finding it hopelessly impossible. The mere statement and brief explanation which we have given might perhaps seem to be enough; yet there may be some advantage in making a somewhat more full application.

Let us, then, take first the great example furnished by the miracles wrought by Moses in Egypt. It has been stated that the first criterion of a miracle must be, that the end in view should be worthy of God. Be it borne in mind, then, that man is a fallen and ruined creature, and that God had chosen the race of Abraham to be the medium of at once preserving true religion, and introducing the promised Deliverer into the world. To work miracles for the preservation and deliverance of this chosen people, was, therefore, not only worthy of God, since in their protection and deliverance both His own faithfulness and glory were concerned, but also contained a symbolical representation of the deliverance and salvation of mankind. Thus the first criterion is fully realized and applied.

That the miracles wrought by Moses were instantaneously and publicly performed; that they were such as could be judged of by the senses of all; that they were openly, broadly, and incontestably evident in their own nature; and that they were wholly independent of second causes,—must be at once admitted. The whole court of Pharaoh, and the whole people of Egypt, were made abundantly sensible of the reality of these miracles. So were the whole of the Israelites; but by the opposite fact,—the fact that, while Egypt was perishing under the presence and the wrath of Jehovah, the Israelites in the land of Goshen were free from the operation of these terrible plagues. Further, the Passover was instituted to commemorate the protection of

the Israelites on that dread night when all the first-born of the Egyptians perished, and was kept up as a perpetual memorial of that event in particular, and generally of the other preceding plagues. Again, and in completion of the application of these criteria, while the whole Hebrew race sojourned in the wilderness, dwelling together in one camp, or journeying together from place to place in one body, during the period of forty years, all these miracles were repeatedly brought before them in connection with all their civil and sacred institutions, as the basis of their entire national polity, and referred to and recorded in their written laws. Remembering, too, that they were a peculiarly wayward and fickle people, manifesting all the results of their previous prolonged slavery and degradation, it cannot be doubted, that if it had been possible for them to dispute one particle of all these miraculous narratives which, if true, they had all witnessed, if false, they had not witnessed, and yet were expected to believe, they would have openly denied them, stoned Moses, appointed another leader, and returned to Egypt. But they never attempted to dispute or deny the truth of these narratives,—they constantly and from the first commemorated the miracles,—they accepted their embodiment in their whole civil and sacred institutions; and thus an entire nation, amounting to several millions, became the witnesses of the truth and reality of all those miracles. This is without a parallel in the history of any people.

This may be regarded as a fitting place in which to offer some remarks relative to the miracles alleged to have been wrought by the Egyptian magicians, in their competition with Moses. The first miracle wrought by Moses was for a sign to Pharaoh,—the turning of his rod into a serpent. This had been a sign to himself previously in the wilderness. But the king sent for the magicians, wise men, and sorcerers. These very terms imply craft and deception. It is then said, “The magicians did in like manner with their enchantments.” Their rods also became serpents. The question arises, Was this a true miracle,—as truly a miracle as that of Moses, only the superiority of Moses proved by his rod swallowing their rods? If so, then all that was directly proved was, that Moses was a more powerful magician than they were; but this also might be inferred, that they were able, by their enchantments, to call into action some evil being who had power to invade or tran-

scend the laws of nature, and to produce a new creative act. The narrative does not seem to us to warrant such a conclusion. But it is best to notice the whole of this strange scene, before we attempt an explanation. Next was wrought the miracle of changing the waters of the *Nile into blood*. It is stated that "the magicians did so with their enchantments." This was the *first* plague. The *second* plague was that of the *frogs*; and again it is said, "The magicians did so with their enchantments." The *third* plague was that of the *lice*; and now it is said, "The magicians did so to bring forth lice, but they could not. Then said they, This is the finger of God."

Let us now calmly and carefully examine the passage. Let it be noticed, in the first place, that the word "*enchantments*" is always employed with regard to what the magicians did. The Hebrew word so translated is derived either from a word signifying *to hide*, or from one signifying *to dazzle*. In either way it implies deception, either by concealed craft or by dazzling rapidity of action—the very methods employed by common jugglers to accomplish their sleight-of-hand wonders. No such arts were used by Moses. The magicians were sent for by Pharaoh, and would be told, doubtless, what Moses had done, so that they could come prepared. Now, it is well known, that from time immemorial there have been men, both in Egypt and in India, who possessed some secret art of charming serpents, or training them, extracting their fangs, and using them in their feats of jugglery. Such serpents they could easily hide in their loose flowing sleeves, and throw them to the ground, while pretending to throw down their rods, hiding the rods at the same time. Imagine them chanting their "*enchantments*," whirling round and round with intense rapidity, as Eastern dervishes still do, then, raising a loud, long yell, and suddenly stopping in their dazzling whirl, producing their tame serpents. In all this there is no miracle; but it would satisfy the king. Next comes the miracle of turning the waters of the great river Nile into blood. Again the magicians have recourse to their "*enchantments*;" not, however, to work a miracle on a great scale, awfully patent to all Egypt, but to produce something similar with a little water in some small vessel. The real difficulty for them would be to procure water not already blood; but supposing a small supply obtained, it would be very easy for any swift-fingered juggler to put into

it a chemical powder, colourless itself, but capable of changing the colour of the water while they were going through their incantations. There is no miracle here—no need for any demon even; but that only is done which any proficient in chemistry and sleight-of-hand could very easily effect. Yet it pleased the king. Once more: frogs in horrible profusion fill and pollute the land, at the word of Moses,—the bare word, without any artful “enchantments.” Again the magicians “do so with their enchantments.” They, too, bring up frogs. Where do they bring them from? Where do they bring them to? They bring them from a land full of them already, into a land full of them already! What miracle is there in this? What need of “enchantments” even? Say the frogs had been by great exertions swept out of Pharaoh’s immediate presence for a moment, it is but slipping a side door open at the right instant, and the loathsome reptiles hop into the apartment. There would be the repetition of the “enchantments,” no doubt, for the sake of the deception; but that was all. No miracle was needed, or could have been distinguished from the miracle already so hideously abundant. Again a miracle is wrought; but mark well its special circumstances. It was wrought, apparently, in the open air, for “Aaron smote the dust of the earth.” No pre-intimation had been given what would be next done; the magicians were on the spot, and had no opportunity of preparing their imitations: on a sudden the smitten dust “became lice in man and in beast.” “And the magicians did so with their enchantments, to bring forth lice, but they could not.” Then they, sufferers now themselves, “said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God.” Why should they have said so now? What was there so peculiar in this miracle? Nothing in the miracle itself, but much in the circumstances above enumerated: the open air—the unprepared state of the magicians—their own personal participation in the vileness and the misery inflicted by this plague on man and beast, from which, doubtless, Moses and Aaron were free,—all these circumstances combined to humble their pride of successful jugglery; and they yielded in misery and shame.

But mark narrowly the language, “they did so, but they could not.” They “did so”—did as they had done before; “but they could not.” The words, “*did so*,” are here used

and coupled with “they *could not*.” These words, then, do not mean that they actually *did* what, by their “enchantments,” they *seemed to do*. Is not this to be regarded as explanatory of the previous use of these same words in the instances there recorded? We are decidedly of opinion that it is to be so regarded; and if so, then this passage contains enough for its own true explanation, enabling us to say confidently, that all the actions apparently performed by the magicians were mere feats of jugglery and deception, performed under the dazzling artifices of their “enchantments.” And thus, without any violence to the language of the sacred narrative, but by merely understanding it rightly and using it rightly, and without any strained interpretation, we are enabled to explain the whole account, without admitting that the magicians wrought any miracle whatever.

Why did they not remedy the matter, by removing the plagues?

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

It is interesting, with regard to the ten plagues of Egypt, to notice, that they naturally divide into *three threes*, followed by one of such a terrific character, that the whole nation demanded the immediate departure, or expulsion, rather, of the Israelites.

These successive *threes* may be arranged and contemplated as follows:—

First three: 1. The Nile smitten; 2. The plague of *frogs*; 3. The plague of *lice*.

Second three: 1. The plague of *swarms*; 2. The murrain of cattle; 3. The plague of *boils and blains*.

Third three: 1. The plague of *hail and fire*; 2. The plague of *locusts*; 3. The plague of *darkness*.

Then followed the death of all the first-born of Egypt, which proved decisive.

Now, it is extremely interesting to notice the bearing of these *three threes* of plagues upon the primitive idolatry of ancient Egypt, so far as this can now be made out and rendered intelligible, from recent inquiry and interpretation. The ancient mythological system, like that of all other very ancient nations, rested upon the theory of a Monad, evolving itself into

a Triad, which Triad became the three great deities to which they rendered supreme worship.

These three superior deities			
in Egypt were . . .	<i>Kneph,</i>	<i>Pthah,</i> and	<i>Khem.</i>
Physically, these were	The Nile,	The Sun, Light,	Heat, Life, Light.
Metaphysically, they were	Life,	Love,	Justice.
Or,	Preserver,	Creator,	Destroyer.
Or,	Spirit,	Intellect,	Power.
Each had its sacred animal,	Serpent,	Scarabæus, Bull,	Goat, Bull, Phallus.
	Hawk,	Goose,	Crocodile.
Corresponding to the Hindu	Vishnu,	Brahma,	Siva.

But these deities were often so represented, that their characteristic attributes were interchangeable; and this tended to introduce confusion in later ages, and in the explanations of Greek writers.

The *first series* of three plagues smites *Kneph* and his attributes and worshippers.

The *second series* falls upon *Pthah* and his attributes and worshippers.

The *third series* overwhelms *Khem* and his attributes and worshippers.

The final and consummating tenth compels the whole nation at once to feel, that anything more would necessarily be utter national destruction.

We may glance more rapidly along the succession of miracles recorded in the Scriptures, which may be shown to be all in accordance with the criteria already mentioned. The giving of the law on Mount Sinai displays the combination of all these criteria in a very remarkable manner. It was in every respect worthy of God,—in the value of the end contemplated, the repromulgation of the divine law to man, for his guidance in the path of duty, and in the divine glory and majesty there displayed. It was instantaneous and public in its awful manifestation. That manifestation was even terribly obvious to the sensational perceptions of Israel's trembling millions. No second causes bore any share in the dread display of the present Jehovah, except those that merely manifested His presence, in the fire on Sinai's granitic peaks; in the loud, long trumpet-blast; and in the terrible sight, which caused even Moses to exceedingly tremble and quake. And the law itself, written on two tables of stone by the finger of Jehovah, and placed in the

ark of the testimony, formed an enduring monument of the event, written at the time, with all the sacred institutions then framed, and kept in perpetual observance from that hour till the present, and to be kept for ever. No captious infidel can dispute that miracle and its proofs.

The crossing of the river Jordan was an equally public miracle, was recorded at the time, had its monumental stones erected at Gilgal, and was often commemorated in the public psalms and praises of the national religion.

The conflict at Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, in the presence of that idolatrous and hostile king, and thousands of the idolatrous and wavering multitude, might also be shown to have for its proof the combination of many, if not all, of the criteria mentioned above, to such an extent that it never was, and never could be, doubted or denied. It may be specified as an interesting illustration of the importance due to the publicity of a miracle, that when Elijah was translated, in the immediate presence of Elisha alone, the sons of the prophets did not give it implicit credit till they had made ample search for his body, and found it not.

All the criteria which we have mentioned are wonderfully combined in the case of the miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ. His very coming to this world, as it was itself miraculous and the beginning of His miracles, was also, in every respect, an event worthy of the interposition of God. Man had both offended the divine majesty by the violation of the divine law, and was suffering under the divine displeasure—was a sinner, and was lost and perishing. In this dread emergency Christ came to manifest the divine sovereignty, to vindicate and magnify the divine law by fulfilling it, and to save perishing man. Thus the first criterion is completely realized. Again, when Christ wrought a miracle, He did it commonly by the mere utterance of His word of creative power; and the effect was instantaneous. These miracles were wrought chiefly in the presence of multitudes, and frequently in Jerusalem and in the presence of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes—all of them His mortal enemies. The few instances in which a miracle was wrought in private, have their own amply appropriate reason in the process of eliciting and testing the faith of the persons on whom the miracles respectively were performed. This fulfils the conditions of the second criterion. All His

miracles were perceivable by the ordinary use of the senses. The bystanders were well able to notice the uprising and walking of a paralytic man; the sudden restored sight of a man previously blind; to hear the praises raised to God by a man who had been dumb; to mark the restored health and purity of one who, but an instant before, was a loathsome leper; to perceive the calm and grateful demeanour of one so recently a raging demoniac; to look with overwhelming astonishment on a man arising out of the grave, where he had lain dead and buried for the space of four days. The third criterion had indeed its abundant answer in these instances. No second causes intervened between His utterance of the word and the accomplishment of the miracle. "He spake, and it was done," as it is said of Jehovah. When He did appear to use some intermediate means, as when He anointed the eyes of a blind man with spittle and clay, there was no relation between the apparent means and the cure thus miraculously performed. But there was a relation to the mental and moral state of the sufferer, to rouse his attention, and to call forth his faith; and as this was mental and moral, not physical, while the cure was wrought in accordance with the faith, it not only fulfils the requirements of the fourth criterion, but manifests the moral character which belongs to every true miracle.

The fifth and sixth criteria find their united demands unitedly answered in the Christian church and its institutions and ordinances. For as all these sprang from and manifest *faith in Christ*, so their institution at that very time was a public setting up of the most evident and intelligible kind of monuments, to bear record of the truths which their very existence so fully commemorated. A vast pile of stones might be erected as a monument of some mighty deed, and the deed be so forgotten, that people could but wonder for what purpose these stones had been piled together. A huge pillar might be erected and covered over with sculptured inscriptions, and in the lapse of ages be overthrown, the inscriptions effaced, and the stranger left to gaze idly on the crumbling and shapeless block. Written records may perish, as some of the writings of antiquity have done, so completely as to leave nothing but their names, constraining us to deplore the irreparable loss. But the Christian church is a monument of a far more enduring kind. It is a living temple, of which every believer is a living stone,

so that at once the whole structure and each several part can give a grand harmonious testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus. The Christian church is no tall pillar dimly encrusted over with worn and obliterated inscriptions. It is a stone cut out of a mountain without hands, increasing, and to increase, till it fill the whole earth, enlarging and making more and more prominent its records by its own expanding growth, till they shall be known and read of all men. The written records of Christianity cannot be lost and perish, for they are written in the conscience and in the very spirit of every spiritually minded man; will not perish in the great conflagration; and will be read throughout eternity in the uncreated light of heaven.

We shall not at present dwell further on the numerous miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ, as we purpose to direct attention more fully to these in a separate section. But we must glance briefly at the miracle of the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. That event had been foretold by Christ, but to the disciples alone, and that in terms which they were not then able fully to comprehend. To the Jews of Jerusalem it could not be foreknown. But this miracle was wrought at a time when Jerusalem was full of Hebrew people from all adjacent lands, whose native tongue was, in each instance, that of the land where they habitually dwelt. It had its external accompaniments: the rushing mighty wind, symbol and herald of the Spirit; and the appearance of, as it were, cloven tongues of fire, emblematic of the special gift by which the apostles should be qualified to preach to all the world. A new event was about to take place in the diffusion of the gospel; and the miracle was at once a proof of a divine commission, and a qualification for the due performance of that commission. The gift of tongues was signally apparent to those strangers present from many lands, who were respectively well able to judge of the reality of the miracle, when they heard their native languages spoken by these uneducated Galileans. The very curiosity of these strangers tended to give extreme publicity to the miracle; and from that hour the new-formed and inspired Christian church became the permanent and indestructible record—the living monument of that miracle; and all its institutions were memorials of the miracle of Pentecost. In this we see again the full combination of all the criteria that distinguish a true miracle, and prove it to be true, absolutely true, beyond

the power of all the sceptics or deists in the world to dispute on fair and rational grounds. They may still cavil and contend, and fabricate illusive sophisms, for the evil heart of unbelief is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;" but their efforts will be for ever in vain; and sacred scriptural truth will continue to shine forth, enlightening the world, and dispelling the clouds of earthly falsehood.

SEC. V. EXAMINATION OF HUME'S ARGUMENT AGAINST
MIRACLES.

It is my intention in this section to give an outline of the controversy on the subject of miracles raised by the publication of Hume's celebrated argument against their credibility. This will require me first to state Hume's argument; then to state, in an abbreviated form, the answers that have been given to it; and then to make a few concluding remarks. But let me, first of all, say, that I do this, not because I regard Hume's argument as at all deserving of the amount of attention it has received, but because I think it right to refer to the literature of the subject; and partly, too, because, though no argument has ever been more completely demolished than that of Hume has been, yet sceptics and infidels are in the habit of reproducing it from time to time, as if it were still possessed of some value—had still some amount of vitality.

I shall state Hume's argument in his own words: "Our belief or assurance of any fact from the report of eye-witnesses, is derived from no other principle than experience,—that is, our observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses. Now, if the fact attested partakes of the marvellous, if it is such as has seldom fallen under our own observation, here is a contest of two opposite experiences, of which the one destroys the other, as far as its force goes. Further, if the fact affirmed by the witnesses, instead of being only marvellous, is really miraculous; if, besides, the testimony, considered apart and in itself, amounts to an entire proof,—in that case there is proof against proof, of which the strongest must prevail. A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the

very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. And if so, it is an undeniable consequence, that it cannot be surmounted by any proof whatever from testimony. A miracle, therefore, however attested, can never be rendered credible even in the lowest degree. A miracle, supported by any human testimony, is more properly a subject of derision than of argument. No testimony for any kind of miracle can ever possibly amount to a probability. We establish it as a maxim, that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle, and make a just foundation for any system of religion."

Dr. Campbell, of Aberdeen, undertook to answer and repel Hume's argument; and began his reply in the following manner: "In answer to this, I propose first to prove, that the whole is built upon a false hypothesis. That the evidence of testimony is derived solely from experience, which seems to be an axiom of this writer (Hume), is at least not so incontestable a truth as he supposes it; that, on the contrary, testimony hath a natural and original influence on belief, antecedent to experience, will, I imagine, easily be evinced. For this purpose let it be remarked, that the earliest assent which is given to testimony by children, and which is previous to all experience, is in fact the most unlimited; that by a gradual experience of mankind it is gradually contracted, and reduced to narrower bounds. To say, therefore, that our diffidence in testimony is the result of experience, is more philosophical, because more consonant to truth, than to say that our faith in testimony has this foundation. Accordingly, youth, which is unexperienced, is credulous; age, on the contrary, is distrustful. Exactly the reverse would be the case, were this author's doctrine just."

This is the essence and germ of Dr. Campbell's reply; and it deserves to be remarked, that although subsequent authors have generally regarded it as unsatisfactory, it had the effect of putting Hume's boasting to silence. It did more: in the next edition of his essay, Hume introduced into it some minute but very important alterations, abating a little his boastful tone, and in an appendix actually stating a hypothetical case in which the concurrence of testimony would be enough to constrain even a *philosopher* to believe an event contrary to all former experience. This amounted to an admission of defeat; but this admission was so placed as to attract as little attention as pos-

sible, while the sophistry was retained in the body of the essay, to do the evil for which it was designed.

Dr. Chalmers set himself to grapple with Hume's argument; but in the commencement of his answer he thought it necessary to remove what he regarded as an unsound principle in Dr. Campbell's reply to Hume. His objection is to this effect: "We doubt whether Dr. Campbell is right in the theory which he proposes respecting the origin of our faith in testimony. In opposition to Hume, who grounds it on experience, he makes it a principle *sui generis* in the mental constitution, or an aboriginal instinct of the understanding." Following out this remark, Dr. Chalmers proceeds at great length, and with much acuteness of thought, force of argument, and prodigality of illustration, to prove that our faith in testimony, and our faith in the constancy of nature, rest on the same basis, *experience*; that, in point of fact, what we commonly call experience, is, truly, testimony, and what we commonly call testimony, or our faith in testimony, rests upon our experience of the veracity with which other men record what they have seen; and that it would be just as true to say, there is a kind of testimony which never deceives, as to say, there is a kind of experience which never deceives,—or, conversely, there is a kind of experience which often deceives, and a kind of testimony which often deceives. Having established this point, and removed what seemed a very doubtful assumption of a very doubtful first principle by Dr. Campbell, it was not difficult for Dr. Chalmers to point out the fallacious sophistry of Hume's argument;—according to which, what is invariable in the most certain kind of experience is produced against what is doubtful in the most uncertain kind of testimony,—as if all experience were equally certain, and all testimony equally doubtful. This fallacy being detected, Hume's argument is easily shown to be utterly false—a pure sophism,—and therefore absolutely invalid, its boasting vain and powerless, and its conclusion untrue.

There is great difficulty in giving an extract from Dr. Chalmers, in consequence of his peculiar and incessant intermingling of his objection to Dr. Campbell's theory of a tendency to believe in testimony being an original principle of the mind, and his argument against Hume's sophism. We shall attempt, however, to extract as much as to present his answer pretty fully.

“The diffidence of testimony which Dr. Campbell affirms that experience teaches us, he leaves the reader to understand as being a diffidence of all testimony; whereas experience teaches us to distrust that testimony only which is presented to our notice with the usual characteristics of falsehood, and, on the other hand, to confide in the testimony which is presented to our notice with the reverse characteristics of truth. But Mr. Hume equally misses the same important distinction, when he affirms, that our experience in the truth of testimony is not so uniform as our experience in the constancy of nature. We would reply, Of *what testimony* is it, that our experience in its truth is not so uniform? We allow the assertion in regard to *that testimony* which bears upon it the marks of imposture. We further allow it of the testimony which, without any glaring marks of imposture, may have the gainly and prepossessing appearance of truth, without its reality. But we cannot allow it of *all* testimony. We affirm that a testimony is conceivable—nay, that a testimony has often been given, having such marks and characteristics of truth accumulated upon it, and, in such circumstances, of unlikelihood or moral impossibility of its falsehood, that we can aver, with the utmost confidence, of such testimony, that it never has deceived us, and never will. Mr. Hume charges testimony *in the general* with what is often realized in *one* species of testimony, not so often in a *second*, less frequently in a *third*, much seldomer in a *fourth*, with the exceeding rarity of an occurrence quite marvellous in a *fifth*, and never in a *sixth* species of testimony. The subtle error of Mr. Hume’s sophistry lies in this, that he makes all testimony responsible for all the instances of falsehood, whereas he should make each species responsible only for its own instances. This needs well to be pondered; for it is really here that the whole plausibility of his argument lies. The sophistry retains its force so long as we look to testimony in the gross: divide the testimony into its kinds, and the sophistry is dissipated.”

“The reasoning of Mr. Hume may be cast into the following syllogism:—Testimony has deceived us, but nature is never known to have done so by the violation of her constancy. But these violations of nature’s constancy, termed miracles, are only reported to us by testimony. Therefore these events, never known to have happened, as being deposed to by an

evidence that has often deceived us, must be rejected as untrue. The fallacy of this syllogism is akin to that which is termed by logicians the fallacy of composition, the middle term being used in the one premiss distributively, and in the other collectively. In the above syllogism the *middle term*, or the word *testimony*, is used collectively in one of the premises, and distributively in another. It is true that testimony has deceived us, but this ought not to have been charged collectively upon all testimony; and it is also true that miracles, especially the miracles of the gospel, are reported to us by testimony; but if by a sort of testimony which never has deceived us, this at least counter-weighs, if it do not overmatch, the improbability which attaches to the event in question, because of its miraculous character."

Dr. Chalmers, after having thus clearly and conclusively pointed out and refuted Hume's sophism, proceeds to show the "power of even a single testimony to accredit improbable or singular events." His argument is conclusive; but it is somewhat obscured by expansion, as is the case with that argument, out of which we have attempted to extract the essence. His new argument might have been thus stated: If the argument of Hume were valid, it ought to follow, that even if we saw a miracle, we would not believe it; because the evidence of our senses has sometimes deceived us,—the uniformity of nature never. But in any supposable case we can test the evidence of our senses, when some remarkable phenomenon is presented to us, and thereby can prove that their report at the moment is identical with that of our whole previous lifetime, and that, therefore, there is an incalculable preponderance of evidence in support of their veracity in the supposed case. The evidence of one sense, *sight*, would therefore be justly entitled, when so tested, to be received as sufficient proof of a miracle. But we might support it by the evidence of another, and another—of *hearing* and *touch*—and then multiply the evidence of *sight* by *their* evidence; and the result might be many millions of millions to one in support of the miracle. By a similar method we might show the immense preponderance of value due to a single testimony which never had been known to deceive; and we might confirm and multiply this by the concurrent testimony of many witnesses bearing a similarly indisputable testimony. Such is the tenor of the argument, given with great power and splendour, by Dr. Chalmers.

Hume's sophism has been detected and exposed, very quietly, but very conclusively, by Whately, as follows:—There is an argument against miracles by the well-known Mr. Hume, which has perplexed many persons, and which exactly corresponds to the above kind of fallacy. It may be stated thus: "Testimony is a kind of evidence more likely to be false, than a miracle to be true. Or it may be expressed in other words: We have more reason to expect that a witness should lie, than that a miracle should occur: the evidence on which the Christian miracles are believed is testimony; therefore the evidence on which the Christian miracles are believed is more likely to be false than a miracle to be true. Here it is evident, that what is spoken of in the first of these premises is, '*some* testimony,' not '*all* testimony' (or *any whatever*); and by '*a* witness' we understand, '*some* witness,' not '*every* witness;' so that this apparent argument has exactly the same fault as the one above. And you are to observe that it makes no difference, as to the point now before us, whether the word *some* be employed, or a different word, such as '*most*,' or '*many*,' if it be in any way said, or implied, that you are *not* speaking of '*all*.' For instance, '*most* birds can fly; and an ostrich is a bird,' proves nothing." The "*one above*" referred to is this: "Food is necessary to life; corn is food; therefore corn is necessary to life." Here "*necessary to life*" is affirmed of "*food*," but not *universally*; for every one would understand you to be speaking not of "*all* food," but of "*some* food," as being "*necessary to life*."

The simple logical refutation thus furnished by Dr. Whately is one that may be very easily understood and remembered; and it is not only absolutely conclusive, but has also the advantage of bringing Hume's boasted argument down to its proper level, which is a very low one indeed—a *paltry verbal sophism*. Had Hume been honest enough to state his argument logically, and in the syllogistic form, or had some one done so at the time of its appearance, it would have perished as soon as produced, and been consigned to contempt at once, and to oblivion long ago. In the syllogistic form, and truly stated, it must have been as follows: "*Some* testimony is more likely to be false, than a miracle to be true; but the evidence on which the Christian miracles are believed is testimony; therefore"—Therefore *what*? Nothing is proved. Some birds can fly; an ostrich is a

bird; therefore— Therefore *what?* Will this prove that an ostrich can fly? Some philosophers are Christians: David Hume was a philosopher; therefore— Therefore *what?* Was David Hume a Christian? Every one who has but the least glimpse of perception of true reasoning must see that a *particular premiss* can never enable us to draw a *general conclusion*. To say that *some* testimony is false, will never enable us to say, as a conclusion, *all* testimony is false. Or to assert that *some* experience is invariable, will never enable us to conclude that *all* experience is invariable. Had Hume dared to say *all* testimony deceives, or *no* testimony can prove anything to be true, every person would have indignantly rejected the impudent assertion; and his attempt to refute the evidence of testimony in support of the truth of miracles, on the strength of such an assertion, would have appeared only as an insult to the common veracity and common sense of mankind.

There is another fallacy in Hume's argument which ought to be pointed out, not because that argument needs any more, or other, refutation, but because some valuable experience in detecting fallacious reasoning may be acquired in the process. The essence of Hume's argument has been stated by Paley thus: "It is contrary to experience that a miracle should be true, but not contrary to experience that testimony should be false." This appears plausible; but let us try what it is really worth as an argument. Mark, then, that the force of the argument resides in the word *experience*. But what is experience? Is it merely the amount of facts that have come under the observation of *any one man*? Hume may say that he has had *no* experience of a miracle; Paul says he *has had* such experience. These assertions may be regarded as balancing each other, so that any person may believe either of them as he pleases, or according as he regards Hume or Paul to be the more trustworthy man. Further, Hume cannot say that it is really contrary to his experience that a miracle should be true, because he has not really had any experience in the matter; and this *mere negation of experience* is not *positive contrary experience*. But Paul declares that his experience is direct and positive, that he *has* seen miracles wrought; and is willing to confirm the truth of his declaration at the peril of his life. So far, then, the preponderance of experience is vastly on the side of the truth of miracles. Still further, no number of merely negative expe-

riences can ever amount to a positive. Any amount of ciphers added together, or multiplied by each other, will yield but one cipher still. But positive experiences, like actual numerals, may be both added and multiplied, till the result may be beyond calculation.

“No, no,” replies Mr. Hume, eagerly; “you misunderstand me. I do not mean my own experience only, but the experience of all men universally.” But how can we know anything about the experience of other men except by *testimony*? Yet you talk about experience—the experience of all other men—universal experience, as if it were something different from testimony, when you must be quite aware that you neither do nor can know anything about the experience of other men except by testimony,—that very evidence on which you seem anxious to cast discredit! Deny the validity of testimony if you will; but you know, and we know, that you are thereby and to the same extent denying the certainty of experience, which you obtain only through testimony. Or, admit and assert the uniformity, constancy, and trustworthiness of experience, if you will; and then we again say, that you know, and we know, that you are thereby and to the same extent asserting the uniformity and trustworthiness of testimony, with the slight and unimportant exception of your own experience and testimony, to which neither you yourself nor any one else will attach much credit. Once more, if you affirm that all experience is in contradiction to the occurrence of miracles, this, since you know the experience of other men only through testimony, is the same as to affirm that all testimony is in contradiction to them. Yet you know perfectly that this is false, utterly and notoriously false; since you know perfectly well that we have the recorded testimony of the men who lived in the time and at the place where the Christian miracles were wrought, who wrote and published that testimony in the midst of their enemies, by whom its truth was not denied, though it was intensely hated, and that this public and undenied testimony was sealed by the blood of these numerous and competent witnesses. And we have no recorded testimony against these miracles by the men who lived in the time and at the place where they occurred. That is, we have recorded experience, in the only form in which it is possible for us to have it, in support of the truth of the Christian miracles; and we have no recorded experience against

them—none whatever. A more complete detection of sophistry is not possible.

We have reasoned with Hume on his own ground ; and, on the strength of the result, we venture unhesitatingly to term his argument a paltry and dishonest sophism, of the base dishonesty and shuffling paltriness of which he must himself have been conscious, as we cannot but believe.

It may be expedient, though not very necessary, to point out still another fallacious element in Hume's sophistry. He manifestly attaches much importance to the uniformity of the laws of nature. But we ask how this uniformity is ascertained? Any one man has only a very limited means of knowing anything about these laws. He has commonly only a very narrow sphere of observation ; his own country, or his own locality, usually bound his opportunities ; and his life limits the term in which it is possible for him to observe the operations of nature. It would, therefore, never be possible for any one man to form any such idea as that of an universally uniform order of the laws of nature from his own observation and experience alone. He must needs avail himself of the observation and experience of other men to the greatest extent possible. But this he can obtain in no other way than by testimony. What he calls universal and uniform experience resolves itself, then, into *universal and uniform testimony*. But if these be identical, as it appears they must be, then his argument is self-contradictory, and destroys itself ; for the testimony, or recorded experience, is not uniform, there being testimony for deviations from the laws of nature, or miracles, as well as for their uniformity. But still more, his own belief in the uniformity of the laws of nature rests on the very same kind of evidence which he rejects, when it is produced in support of deviations from that uniformity. He rejects all credence in miracles, on the ground that nature is uniform, and human testimony fallacious ; yet it is only on the information of this same fallacious testimony that he believes in the uniformity of nature. There cannot be a more complete instance of self-contradiction !

We have often wondered whether Hume really entertained anything like a sincere belief in the validity of his own fallacious argument. It is very evident that he was abundantly conversant with the laws of reasoning, as a logical art of con-

structing valid arguments, or detecting unsound ones. But if so, he could scarcely fail to be aware of the fallacies introduced into his own argument by the ambiguous meanings given to each of its two main terms, *experience* and *testimony*. There can be no doubt that he would very easily have detected a similar fallacy in the argument of any opponent, if there had been any similar fallacy to detect. Nay, there is proof that he was conscious of the fallacy in his own argument, at least to some extent. In the earlier editions of his *Essay on Miracles*, he says boldly, "No testimony for any kind of miracle can ever possibly amount to a probability, much less to a proof." After the publication of Dr. Campbell's *Dissertation on Miracles*, Hume substituted the words, "*has ever amounted*" for "*can ever possibly amount.*" By this substitution he showed clearly enough, that he was aware of the rashness, to say the least, of his assertion—an assertion inconsistent with reason, nay, the very effrontery of sophism. He had been constrained to see that his audacious effrontery had not terrified all the defenders of the Christian faith; and while he felt that not to answer his antagonist, but to repeat his sophistry, was for him the safest course, he felt also that it was necessary to withdraw somewhat of what was at once most offensive and most assailable in his argument, and provide for himself a plausible retreat in the modified statement, "*has ever amounted,*" instead of "*can ever possibly amount,*" lest proof should be so produced as to render any sophistical objection absurd and impossible. This stealing away from anticipated defeat, as we cannot but regard it, seems to us a sufficient indication that Hume was not the dupe of his own evasive and subtle ingenuity, as men sometimes are; but that he knew his argument to be fallacious, all the time that he was proclaiming it to be irrefragably conclusive. His sophistry cannot be accounted for on the ground of his want of intellectual perspicuity; for no man in his age, and few men in any age, have manifested more penetrating clearness and vigour of intellect than David Hume. But he hated Christianity, both on account of the moral purity of its precepts, so contrary to the life he led and the principles he advocated; and he hated still more, because he feared, the awful doctrine of future retribution which it reveals, and which he wished to think untrue; therefore he sought to destroy all belief in Christian evidence. This he has not

accomplished. On the contrary, his attempt has caused the evidence of miracles to be studied profoundly, indicated amply, and brought forward in the irresistible might of its divine authority.

It is our decided opinion, that Hume would not have made the attempt which he made, and as he made it, but for two reasons. The juncture was favourable for such an event, especially in Scotland. Moderatism had at the time so great an ascendancy, and was manifesting so great a dislike to evangelical truth, that Hume might not unnaturally suppose the leading Moderate ministers would be pleased rather than offended to find the supreme claims of religion on men's belief and obedience very greatly diminished. Another reason might be, that he was acute enough to perceive the disadvantage to which the prevalent erroneous definition of miracles exposed any argument drawn from their evidence on the side of Christianity. When he could say, and the correctness of the definition not be disputed, "a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature," he could easily see, that in arguing from the position of the *uniformity of nature*, against the *violation of nature*, he would have the plausible side of the argument, if he could but plausibly maintain it; and such a position could not but be attractive to a dexterous sophist. That his argument should be a purely sophistical one throughout, therefore, was only what might have been expected; and though he did not deceive himself, and was not sincere in the belief of his own sophism, this could not trouble him, as he had little reason to think the greater part of the Moderate ministers with whom he was acquainted were sincere in their professed belief in Christianity. It very probably surprised him considerably, when he found his argument so promptly and vigorously met by Dr. Campbell; but as the actual sophism was not at once detected and exposed, and as the erroneous definition still retained its currency, he might still entertain some expectation that his argument would continue to exert an influence injurious to Christianity. The detection of Hume's sophistry, and an improved definition of miracles, may now unite in confirming this important branch of Christian external evidence.

SEC. VI. VARIOUS OBJECTIONS STATED AND ANSWERED.

Having dealt with the boasted argument of the greatest opponent of Christianity at some length, and answered conclusively, as we think, his argument against the credibility of miracles, we purpose in this section to give an outline of the various objections that have been urged against Christianity, chiefly against the evidence of miracles, in different ages, and by different antagonists, with what answers may appear necessary.

It is right to state at the commencement, that we are induced to adopt this course, less because we think it necessary, than because we wish to sketch the literature of the subject. Let it be observed, then, in the first place, that the Christian religion is the only one in the world that has in all ages and circumstances publicly and openly rested its claims to be received on the ground of *miracles wrought openly, and in the sight of all men*. This is a remarkable distinction, manifesting a singular confidence in its appeal to the Author and God of nature. The various heathen religions referred their origin always to the mysterious and obscure mythological ages, and never produced either witnesses of the vague, fabulous traditions of that unknown and unrecorded antiquity, or anything in the semblance of contemporaneous written testimony. But the Bible, as we have shown in a former lecture, is itself a record written in remote, and yet not fabulous, antiquity; and it produces contemporaneous evidences at once of its historical narratives, and of its recorded miracles. And in the keenly intelligent and sceptical Augustan age, in the presence equally of the stern Roman and the sophistical Greek, Christianity comes boldly forward, and, in the light of open day, before hostile and prejudiced thousands, displays its miracles, challenges investigation, and demands belief. Now mark how this was met by the Jews of that period. Not one of them ventured to deny the truth of the many miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus. At one time they say, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils;" at another, finding that this calumnious subterfuge will not serve their purpose, they exclaim, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles,"—while the astonished multitude are expressing their irresistible

convictions and emotions in such cries as these: "It was never so seen in Israel!" "Is not this the Messiah?" "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these?" "Hosanna in the highest!" What can high priests, and Pharisees, and Sadducees, and Herodians, and Scribes say to the contrary? Nothing: but they think to put an end to all by *putting Him to death*.

They succeed in that cruel design; but it does not stop the progress of Christianity. On the contrary, after a brief interval, the scattered disciples of the Crucified One, who had at first seemed overwhelmed by the death of their Lord and Master, appear boldly in public, affirm that He has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, declare that all these events are the fulfilling of Scripture, rightly understood, and work miracles openly in His name. What is to be done now? The miracles performed by Jesus cannot be denied,—they were too recent and too well known. The miracles now wrought by the apostles cannot be denied,—they have been wrought at the gate of the temple itself, and made "manifest to all them that dwell at Jerusalem." They apprehend the apostles; they threaten them, they scourge them, they cast them into dungeons, they instigate the rulers to put them to death, they persecute them everywhere to the very utmost of their power. But they cannot destroy Christianity. It lives on, begins to pervade the world, and takes its place in history. What must the later Jews do now? They cannot deny that Christianity exists. It could not have come into existence if there had not been such a person as Jesus, and if the miracles wrought by Him, and not denied by their fathers of that age, had not been true. They must therefore try to account for these miracles. This, accordingly, is what the Talmudists attempt to do. They say that Jesus indeed wrought these miracles; but did so by means of a magical use of the unpronounceable name of God—the *tetragrammaton*—which He stole out of the temple by writing it on a slip of parchment, and thrusting it into an incision made in His thigh, lest He should forget it, in consequence of the terrible sacredness of the holy place, in which alone that dread name was to be seen. This utterly incredible fable may do well enough to keep company with the other fables related in the Talmud, and might perhaps be believed by those who would not believe the Bible, even the Old Testament Scriptures of

Moses and the prophets, except as interpreted by rabbinical traditions; but of course it cannot be believed by any one else. It proves, however, that all Jews, in all ages, have been constrained to admit that true miracles were wrought by Jesus.

Celsus, a very keen, but tolerably intelligent, enemy of Christianity, who wrote in the latter part of the second century, not only admits the chief facts of the Gospel history, but acknowledges that Christ wrought miracles, by which He engaged great multitudes to adhere to Him as the Messiah. That these miracles were really performed, he does not attempt to deny; but he tries to account for them by ascribing them to magic, which, he says, Christ learned in Egypt. The folly of this explanation needs not to be pointed out, further than by reminding you, that while we deny that magic can do any more than produce deceptive appearances, we also direct attention to the fact that Jesus was in Egypt only during a very short period of His early infancy. Hierocles, president of Bithynia, and an open persecutor of the Christians, in the time of Diocletian, beginning of the fourth century, in a treatise which he wrote against Christianity, does not deny the miracles of Christ, but compares them with those which were alleged to have been wrought by Apollonius of Tyana, or Apollonius Tyaneus, as he is commonly called, a Pythagorean philosopher, who was born about the Christian era, but whose life was not written till more than a century after his death, and then compiled from tradition by Philostratus, at the request of the empress, who hated Christianity. Hierocles merely attempted to disparage the miracles performed by Christ, and to represent them as not more wonderful than those ascribed to Apollonius; censuring the Christians for worshipping Christ, when the philosophers did not worship Apollonius.

The Emperor Julian, often called the Apostate, in the fourth century, after having been instructed in the history of the Christian religion, and making profession of it for a time, set himself to destroy it by every means in his power, wielding against it both the terrors of the sword and the skill of the pen, and ridicule, in which he was a master,—even he admits the miracles of Christ, and directs his efforts to the attempt of depreciating their importance. “Jesus,” he says, “did nothing worthy of fame, unless any one can suppose that curing the

lame and the blind, and exorcising demons in the villages of Bethsaida, are some of the greatest works." He further acknowledges, that Jesus had a sovereign power over impure spirits, and that He walked on the surface of the sea. Porphyry might also be mentioned as a similar instance; but I forbear. By the testimony of enemies, therefore, we are able to prove, that the miracles wrought by Christ were admitted to have been real, from the very time when they were wrought, in the country where they were wrought, and among those who would have denied them if they could. And yet Hume and his followers have had the effrontery to say, that "no testimony can ever prove the probability of miracles;" although it be undeniably certain, that testimony did prove the reality of Christ's miracles, even in the estimation of His enemies, who had the best means of ascertaining the value of that testimony, and every inducement which hatred and fear could supply, to discredit it, if possible. The reluctant admission, by those early antagonists of Christianity, of the reality and truth of the Christian miracles, must ever be regarded by all candid men as a far more important testimony on their side, than the rejection of cold, sceptical philosophers of modern times can possibly be deemed against them.

There is a very marked distinction between the miracles of Christ and the apostles, and the instances of the pretended miracles which have been compared with them by opponents. It has already been mentioned, that the fabulous legends related by an interested priesthood relative to the mythological origins of heathen superstitions, bear no resemblance to the authentic and well-attested historical records of the Bible, except that of contrast. But certain authors,—some not very long after the Christian era, as already stated, and others of more modern date,—have attempted to produce narratives of miracles said to have been wrought by individuals within the historic period. Of these, we may mention the names of Aristeeas, Pythagoras, Alexander of Pontus, Vespasian, and Apollonius Tyaneus. The account of Aristeeas was first given by Herodotus, who did not write till *four hundred and ten years* after the final disappearance of Aristeeas, and who says only, that he heard the tradition when he was in Asia Minor; and he relates it with the well-known mark with which he accompanies the narratives for which he does not mean to vouch,—ὡς φασι, as they say.

The miracles said to have been wrought by Pythagoras are recorded in the life of that ancient philosopher, as written by Porphyry, at least *eight hundred years* after his death, from traditions said to have been preserved at Tarentum, in Italy. The value of such traditions may be very easily imagined; and they certainly present a very strong contrast to the miracles of Christ, which were recorded by the Apostle Matthew within eight years after the crucifixion, and recorded at Jerusalem itself, in the midst of His enemies. Of the miracles said to have been wrought by Vespasian, this only need be said, that they were reported to have been done in Egypt, on the persons of one man partially blind, and another partially lame, neither of them regarded as incurable by the physicians,—by an emperor, at the request of priests, in the midst of flatterers, and for the political purpose of representing the choice of Vespasian as agreeable to the gods: let all this be remembered, and we shall not have far to seek for the explanation of such pretended miraculous cures, related by a historian at Rome, who saw none of them; and relates the account only on the report of the interested and flattering courtiers. Yet Hume ventures to relate this piece of well-managed political intrigue, and to place it before his readers, as if it were similar to the miracles wrought by Christ. He ought to have had more respect for his readers, and for his own credit as a historian.

We need scarcely refer to the prodigies recorded by the ancient historians, chiefly on the authority of priests, augurs, and soothsayers, and without any evidence that they really happened. Every one will call to mind the many prodigies said to have taken place at special junctures, and recorded in the “pictured page of Livy,” giving a romantic interest to his fresh and glowing narratives. But of course these had nothing to do with the accrediting of a messenger from heaven, commissioned to institute some new religion: they were related by the priests of a religion already in possession of the nation’s belief or credence, and for political purposes. When we read them, we cannot help calling to mind the sarcastic remark of Cicero, himself a member of the sacred college of augurs, that he “wondered how one augur could look another in the face without laughing,”—so conscious was he of the imposture pervading the entire system.

It is necessary, however painful, to direct attention to the

almost innumerable pretended miracles alleged to have been wrought by the hosts of saints and saintesses of that corrupt system, the Papacy, which so long bore, and well-nigh engrossed the name of the Christian church. The rise of these superstitious pretences was contemporaneous with the decay of true spirituality in the church; and both followed closely after the cessation of the fierce and nearly exterminating persecutions through which Christianity had to pass. During these persecutions many fled to the desert solitudes, and to mountain fastnesses and caves, where they led lives of silent seclusion, fitted to test severely both their soundness in the faith and their mental soundness. When persecution ceased, some of these revisited the abodes of men; and of these, some were found to have contracted a stern and gloomy asceticism, others to have had their minds filled with dreamy and wild illusions. But all of them were viewed with that deep and respectful admiration with which the children of peace gaze on the few seamed and scarred veterans that have returned from some long and perilous warfare. Even their stern asceticism, or visionary fancies, were not only forgiven, but admired, and ere long imitated. The imitators had of course no narratives of trials, sufferings, and deliverances from persecutors, to relate; but they could resort to desert solitudes and mountain caves, and dwell among the relics of the martyrs, and then relate the visions they had seen, and the encounters they had held with demons, still more terrible than human persecutors, aided often in their conflicts by the spirits of the blessed martyrs. Such miraculous conflicts and interpositions became rife, and were readily received by multitudes of eager and wondering listeners. The whole monastic system grew, and became equally famous and powerful, till it stamped its own proud and fabulous character on the whole of papal Christendom. Soon every country had its patron and guardian saint, and its legends of miracles,—every cathedral, every church, every convent, monastery, or nunnery, its miracle-working relics; while, sprinkled thickly throughout the rural districts, the fortunate traveller came into contact with holy trees, and holy thorns, and holy wells and springs, and lakes, and woods, and glens, in prodigal abundance.

But what resemblance did all this bear to the miracles of Christianity? None whatever; unless it be the resemblance

of contrast! All the miracles performed by Christ and His disciples were wrought openly—not in desert solitudes; wrought in the presence of gainsayers and enemies—not related as having been done somewhere by somebody, and reported to credulous and admiring friends; wrought to accredit the commission given to ambassadors from heaven, who had a new message to give,—not merely to embellish a religious system already established, and enjoying the favour of imperial and regal power; wrought by men who never made any use of their miraculous gifts to promote their own advantage—not by men who employed them to promote the wealth, power, and grandeur of themselves, or their priestly order; wrought and recorded as essentially connected with gospel truth, morality, and mercy—not as the lying legends of impure and cruel monasticism. Anything more completely contrasted and opposed than the Christian miracles and the monkish legends cannot possibly be imagined. That these legends should now be broadly flaring over even Scotland, countenanced by people of rank and influence, invading the Church of England, and carrying some of its dignitaries not only half-way to Rome, but even wholly into that black abyss of falsehood, wickedness, and blasphemy, appears to be almost as incredible as anything that monkery itself has recorded,—credible only on the ground that God has permitted a frivolous and a godless generation to sink into strong infatuation and belief in lies.

Probably scepticism has had no small share in promoting the return of superstition. The human mind cannot content itself without some belief in the supernatural. And if scepticism has destroyed or seriously shaken its belief in the Bible,—to whose holy truths, besides, the human mind has instinctively a guilty aversion,—nothing is more likely than that it will have recourse to Popish superstition, which can easily afford to grant to its votaries indulgences to sin,—that is, in return for a *proper pecuniary consideration*. When David Hume directed the attention of the sceptical public to the miracles said to have been performed at the tomb of the Abbé de Paris, although his design was only to cast discredit on the true miracles wrought by Christ and the apostles, in which he succeeded but partially and for a short time, even that measure of partial success gained by scepticism, tended, very probably, to bring about the recoil of superstition. Even

to have named such superstitious and pretended miracles along with the miracles of true Christianity, was to give to these pretences a measure of currency, and something like credibility; and many who dreaded the pure doctrines and observances of the gospel would turn from the true and accept the counterfeit.

When the controversy between the Jansenists and the Jesuits was raging in Paris, the Abbé de Paris, a wealthy and zealous Jansenist, gave up his income to the poor, clothed himself in rags, lay on the ground, fed only on black bread, water, and herbs, and subjected himself to the most severe and protracted bodily penances. On his death, in May 1727, his party declared him a saint, and pretended that miracles were wrought at his tomb. Enthusiastic multitudes flocked to the place of wonders, and indulged in conduct so wild and extravagant, that the French government was obliged to interpose and put a stop to it, by causing the churchyard where he was interred to be walled up. Accounts of the cures said to have been wrought were collected, published, examined, and their delusions exposed. The belief in their reality soon died away. The Jansenist party, to support whose cause the whole imposture had been fabricated, sunk under the ridicule caused by the detection; and the triumph of the Jesuits, their opponents, was complete. This, too, presents a marked contrast with the miracles of Christianity. In not one instance were these pretended miracles said to have been *instantaneous*; but after nine days, at least, or twice or thrice nine days of excessive and ridiculous prostrations, convulsions, outcries, gesticulations, and other extravagant mummeries,—exactly the opposite of the calm and instantaneous miracles of true Christianity. Many of those who sought to be cured at that tomb, and went through the prescribed ceremonies, failed to obtain relief; and some, after experiencing temporary relief while the excitement lasted, relapsed into their former condition. No failure of any kind is recorded among the miracles of Christ and the apostles, except the one instance in which the disciples failed to cure the demoniac; but Christ Himself instantly wrought the miracle; and not one relapse is ever said to have taken place. In several instances direct imposture was detected at Paris among those who pretended to be cured, and the very artifice discovered by means of which the pretended miracle had been produced.

Here, again, the contrast is absolute. Several unhappy victims of this delusion contracted worse diseases at the tomb of the Abbé de Paris than those from which they sought to be rescued. And, finally, whenever the civil power interposed, the pretended miracles ceased, and the whole imposture faded away. But, though all the civil powers in the world interposed against Christianity, they were not able to detect a single instance of fraud or deception, then or since; nor could they then, nor can they now, arrest the gospel on its conquering career.

Mohammedanism, perhaps, demands a passing notice. Mohammed himself, indeed, made no pretensions to the power of working miracles. He disclaims that power, in the Korân itself. Pretending to repeat the language of God, the Korân says: "Nothing hindered us from sending thee with miracles, except that the former nations have charged them with imposture." Again, "They say, unless a sign be sent down to him from his Lord, we will not believe; answer: Signs are in the power of God alone, and I am no more than a public preacher. Is it not sufficient for them that we have sent down unto them the book of the Korân, to be read unto them?" Yet, while Mohammed did thus avoid the hazard of producing a testimony to the truth of his commission, because he dared not venture on an experiment so perilous, where failure would have been so certain, he did not hesitate to relate stories abundantly miraculous, respecting his interviews with the angel Gabriel, and his nocturnal journeys to heaven,—only these transactions all took place in secret, where, if there were no witnesses to corroborate, neither were there any to contradict, these manifestly extravagant fables.

Let us, before quitting this view of the subject, again direct our attention reverentially to the true miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus and His apostles. These miracles were not few in number, seldom wrought, and in circumstances liable to suspicion of fraud or collusion. They were wrought openly, in great numbers, in all circumstances, without the possibility of any pre-arrangement, and in the presence often of very great multitudes, many of them keenly and malignantly opposed to Christ. Great multitudes came to Him, bringing the blind, the deaf, the halt, the maimed, the paralytic,—and "He healed them all"—healed them instantaneously—healed them

with a word. This He did throughout all the period of His public ministry, in all parts of the country, at Jerusalem itself, and in the very court of the temple. Not an enemy could deny it, not a deluded follower could disclaim it,—not the wretched traitor who betrayed Him, and then was stung with remorse, could say that he had detected some imposture, and on that account deserted Him. “I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood,” was his despairing exclamation.

When He left this earth, He gave to His apostles the power of working miracles in His name; and they did so in every nation, and without failure. Seventy years elapsed between the commencement of Christ’s ministry and the death of the last of His apostles. During all this long period, miracles continued to be wrought; and yet not once in that long interval, and in such multitudes of diversified places and circumstances, was there a single instance produced, indicating the existence of some deep-laid plan of a confederated band, prosecuting a contrived imposture. Had there been any such confederacy, with anything to conceal, it must have been detected, by the folly or the falsehood of some of the confederates. Sharp and searching was the discipline frequently exercised on those who failed to act in accordance with Christian principles; yet not one of those who were so subjected to punishment ever revealed the secret imposture, or pretended to be able to do so, though expelled from the community. There were apostates during that period, as there was in the days of Christ Himself, whom Judas betrayed; but as the arch-traitor revealed nothing, because he had nothing to reveal, so they revealed nothing, having nothing to reveal.

It has been sometimes said, that the evidence of miracles loses somewhat of its power by the lapse of time; that it is not fitted to make so great an impression on those who receive it only through the medium of testimony, as on those who saw the miracles wrought; and that the length of time which has passed away since that remote age, has diminished the force of that evidence so greatly that it is now scarcely felt. But is there not a fallacy in this assertion? A man may say that a deeper impression would have been produced on his emotional nature, had he seen some startling event, than when he merely learns it from testimony. But would his conviction of its

reality have been altered, assuming the testimony to be sufficient? Certainly not. And if the testimony be a written record, its credibility is not in any degree diminished by time. Does any one think that it is really less certain that Julius Cæsar invaded Britain now, than it was 600 or 1000 years ago? or that it will be less certain 100 years after this than it is now? No person can entertain so absurd a thought. And if the lapse of time does not diminish the force of historical testimony in one well-authenticated instance, why should it be supposed to diminish it in another, at least, equally well authenticated? Besides, the actual existence of the Christian church, a deathless corporate community, which came into being in consequence of Christian principles, truths, and miracles, is itself a living testimony to the truth of the great events from which it drew its origin, and even, in one high sense, a contemporaneous testimony. The fallacy lies in the assumed weakening of the emotions,—*assumed*, we intentionally say, not real, for the emotion is deep and powerful in every man, when he experiences the great miracle of his own conversion.

SEC. VII. GREATEST SPECIAL INSTANCE—THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

The full value of the evidence of miracles may be best apprehended, by taking some special instance and concentrating our attention upon it, that we may adequately understand its nature, and feel its power. Among the miracles recorded as having been wrought by Christ and His apostles, the raising of the dead to life would probably be generally regarded as the greatest and most signal manifestation of divine interposition. In one sense this view is correct, for nothing can be conceived of, more unquestionably transcending all human, all natural power, than the restoration of a dead person to life. This view of miracles, however, is that which we obtained by considering them from a human position or view-point. But from a different and more true and comprehensive position, and retaining our own definition, that miracles are wrought “by the direct intervention of divine power,” we learn that we cannot correctly apply the terms *great* or *little* to any miracle, because it was wrought by infinite power; and to the true idea of *infinite*, such terms are essentially inapplicable. All miracles

are by necessity infinitely beyond the region of second causes, and imply the direct interposition of the FIRST CAUSE; therefore they are all equally impossible to man, and equally easy to GOD. Had this essential principle been duly attended to, it would have prevented many incautious statements that have been made on the subject of miracles—such as the injudicious attempts of reducing them to as near a conformity as possible with the known laws of nature, and accounting for as much of them as might seem capable of being so reduced and explained. With this guarding explanation, that our meaning may not be misunderstood, we are quite ready to admit, that from the human point of view some miracles may *appear* greater than others, and that the *restoration of a dead person to life* will appear the most signal manifestation of divine power.

From this point of view, the raising of Lazarus from the grave, after he had been four days dead, may be regarded as the most signal display of divine power made by Jesus during His lifetime. But the *resurrection of Christ Himself from the dead* is justly entitled to be regarded as the most signal manifestation of divine power of all that are recorded in Scripture. This is the light in which Paul viewed it, when he said, “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” Jesus Himself had named this sign as the ultimate proof by which His claim should be ratified. “As Jonas was . . . so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” “What sign showest thou?” “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews themselves, His adversaries, were aware of this testing sign. “The chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will arise again;” and this was the reason why they sought and obtained a watch of Roman soldiers. Another reason might be stated: The whole gospel scheme of salvation by a Redeemer implies both the death and resurrection of that Redeemer—*His death* as man’s *substitute*—*His resurrection* as proof that the *substitution was accepted*, and was sufficient; and as a predictive pledge of our resurrection also in due time. But this might be regarded as bringing in a doctrine to establish a fact, and therefore an inapplicable argument.

One other preliminary remark may still be made. An infidel opponent might say, "I do not admit the authenticity of the Gospel narratives; you must establish that point before you have any right to reason from the alleged facts which they are said to record." To this plausible objection we reply, that we have already established the general historical truthfulness of the Bible, and are therefore entitled to receive the facts which it records, till its truthfulness be disproved, which is not possible. But we add also this special statement, which we shall prove at the proper place, that Matthew's Gospel history was written and publicly produced and known within about eight years after the crucifixion, and, of course, during the lives of by far the greater part of those who were personally acquainted with the public events which it recorded,—could have refuted them if the record had not been true,—and would certainly have done so, if it had been possible. Nay, we may well say, that Matthew could not have produced his record within eight years after the crucifixion, and in Jerusalem, where it took place, with the slightest hope of having it believed, if it had not been all absolutely true, and known to be so by the entire population, high and low, friends and foes alike. We assume, therefore, and are well warranted in assuming, the authenticity of Matthew's Gospel, and the truth of the facts recorded in it concerning the resurrection of Christ.

The following may be taken as a brief summary of Matthew's record: That Jesus of Nazareth, after a public life of about three years' duration, the wonderful incidents and actions of which are recorded, some in minute detail, as matters of public notoriety, "not done in a corner," but in presence of multitudes, day after day, in all parts of the country, was betrayed into the hands of the Jewish priests and rulers by one of His followers, who received thirty pieces of silver for his treachery; that, having been seized during the night by a band of men appointed by them, and headed by the traitor, in a garden which, in company of His select attendants, He was accustomed to frequent, for retirement, He was examined, first before the high priest and sanhedrim of the Jews, and then before the Roman governor, various remarkable particulars being related respecting each examination; that, by the clamorous and almost seditious importunity of the Jewish priests and people, a sentence of condemnation was extorted from Pilate against Him,

the judge himself, while he pronounced it, protesting openly against it, and washing his hands before the people in token of his being "innocent of the blood of that just person," while they, with frantic vehemence, took upon themselves and their children the guilt and the consequences; that, after many public indignities, He was crucified on Mount Calvary between two malefactors, in the presence of an immense concourse of spectators; that, in compliance with a request made to Pilate, He was taken down from the cross by Joseph of Arimathea, in company with Nicodemus—both of them members of the Jewish council, but dissenting from the proceedings against Jesus,—and laid in the tomb of the former, the place and nature of which are particularly specified; that the Jewish priests and rulers applied to Pilate for a guard of Roman soldiers, purposely to watch the sepulchre and prevent the possible imposture of a pretended resurrection, the plea for this precaution being the previous intimation of Him whom they had crucified, that "after three days He should rise again;" that Pilate granted them their request; that the guard was posted, and the stone which Joseph had placed at the opening of the burial-vault duly sealed, for the greater security; that on the morning of the third day from His crucifixion He did rise, with circumstances of divine interposition, such as filled even the fearless Roman veterans with deadly terror; that, after the resurrection, some of this guard carried a report to the priests and rulers of what had happened; that, in consequence of this information, a special assembly of the authorities was held, and by them the soldiers were bribed with a large sum of money, and a story put into their mouths, which they should tell, to hide the truth; and that the said story was current among the Jewish people at the time when the evangelical history was published.

This narrative of events—the most marvellous throughout that ever took place in the history of the world—is recorded in a style and manner of the greatest simplicity and artlessness, without one word of exclamation to draw the attention of the reader, as if the whole account had contained nothing at all extraordinary; and it was given to the world during the life of the generation among whom these events are said to have taken place, and that, too, very recently, and without the slightest symptom of apprehension that the facts therein related might be questioned. Can any one assert or imagine that such a

narrative could be a fiction,—a fiction intended to bring great public blame upon a set of rulers, specially jealous of any disregard of their authority,—a fiction intended to deceive a whole nation at once, and even those rulers whose conduct it exposed to the severest censure? Had it been a fiction, could it possibly have escaped being detected and refuted at once, both by the rulers whom it defamed, and the populace whose conduct it represented as so fickle and so outrageously ferocious? The rulers had every conceivable reason to detect and expose such an insidious attempt to destroy their character and credit, if it were untrue. The people had equal reason to vindicate themselves from such charges as this forged document fabricated against them, if forged it were. Even the Roman governor was concerned in the matter, and had good reason to resent the discreditable position in which he was placed. One single meeting of the Sanhedrim,—one single appeal to the outraged and calumniated people,—one single application to Pilate, himself deeply implicated in the affair, would have sufficed to detect and refute utterly and conclusively the whole fiction, if it had been a fiction. Nay, even common rumour would have been enough—must have been enough—had the narrative been untrue. Every Jew would have been ready to say to his neighbour, “Have you heard what a tissue of lies the followers of Jesus of Nazareth have now not only invented, but written, and are spreading abroad among the people? You were present on that occasion, as well as I, and thousands more; and we can all testify that no such things took place, as they venture to assert.” And the rulers, instead of “straitly charging” the apostles to preach no more in the name of Jesus, might well have said to them, “Go, by all means, to the market place, and to the temple, and proclaim these stories! Every person that hears you will know that you are speaking the most absolute and absurd falsehoods.” The narrative must have refuted itself immediately, if it had not been absolutely true.

It will not do to say, that the rulers and the nation treated these miraculous fictions with the silent contempt which they deserved, as some sceptics have ventured to insinuate. Within a few years another historical record was published, called “The Acts of the Apostles,” relating a series of connected and kindred events, not less open to confutation than its predecessor, if confutation were possible, and appealing to a still wider circle

of persons. It relates the wonders of the day of Pentecost, witnessed by an immense assemblage of people, not only from all districts of Palestine, but from all quarters of the then known world, by deputations from every settlement of the widely scattered Hebrew race. Why does the nation and race not yet repel indignantly a calumny so malignantly and widely diffused throughout all countries, bringing disgrace upon the Hebrew name? Only because it was *no calumny*, but a solemn and glorious truth, though as yet inadequately understood. Further, in this additional record, mention is made of the methods actually taken by the Jewish rulers to put a stop to the public preaching of the apostles,—not, however, by detecting the forgery and falsehood of their assertions, which would have been effectual, if it could have been done, but by imprisonings, threatenings, scourgings, and death, which were not effectual; for the apostles set all these at defiance, and continued to proclaim what they knew to be true, and what the rulers could not deny to be true. When this book appeared, could not the rulers have denied the truth of its narratives, and appealed to the whole people against its false and seditious statements? They could not; for all Jerusalem, all Palestine, all adjacent countries—Arabia, Damascus, Antioch—all knew them to be true. Jerusalem had witnessed the martyrdom of Stephen. The Christians, fleeing from the fierce persecution, had carried the tidings everywhere. And Saul, the leading persecutor, had become Paul the apostle, and was preaching the faith which he previously strove to destroy.

Let us now look somewhat more closely at the subject, and state some of the leading principles which appear in it; promising that we can do little more than state principles, not construct an argument.

The resurrection of Christ is not only a miracle, but it is *the* miracle on the truth of which, as a fact, the whole of Christianity rests. As a fact which occurred more than eighteen centuries ago, it is a past fact, and, like all past facts, its truth must be proved by the evidence of testimony. Anything like mere metaphysical reasoning can have nothing to do with the case. It is only by the concurrent testimony of a sufficient number of competent and disinterested witnesses that any simple matter of fact can be proved; and when we have satisfied ourselves that the evidence is good, we ought to believe

it. Further, nothing more is required of the witnesses to a simple and open fact, cognisable by the senses, than that they have a healthy condition of mind, and the proper use of their senses, and sufficient opportunity to use them.

1. First, then, let it be observed that the number of the witnesses was amply sufficient. There were "about one hundred and twenty" at that time in Jerusalem; and Paul tells us that Jesus was seen after His resurrection by "upwards of five hundred brethren at once." But we may limit ourselves to the apostles. It is not possible to conceive that so many men could have contrived to frame a fiction so well sustained in every particular, and so perfectly committed to memory as never to betray the slightest contradiction in its parts, or in their testimony. If it should be asked why there were not a greater number of witnesses, or why Jesus did not appear publicly after His resurrection, one answer as to the number is obvious. A case is better proved by a sufficient, though comparatively small, number of thoroughly competent witnesses, than by a very great number, some of whom may not be equally competent. Now the twelve apostles had been the constant companions of Jesus, and were thus perfectly qualified to attest His identity after the resurrection. This very reason directed them in their choice of one in the place of Judas. Peter gave a similar reason to Cornelius: "Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." And while it was necessary that the chosen witnesses should be themselves competent, it was not less necessary that their competency should be known by others, that they might be assured. But why not to all the people? The greater number of the people could not have been competent witnesses: they could only have said, "It is like Him." He had Himself declared that they "should not see Him henceforth, until they should say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord;" and He would not contradict His own solemn declaration. Besides, His *humiliation* was past; and it would not be fitting that He should now be exposed to the curious gaze of an unbelieving multitude.

2. While the apostles were perfectly competent witnesses of the facts which they reported, by their own intimate personal acquaintance with Jesus, and by their own participation in the

events which they recorded, they were men utterly incapable of devising and conducting such a plot, as it would be, if it were regarded as an imposture. They were plain, illiterate fishermen of Galilee, accustomed to nothing more intricate than the mending of their own nets, and to nothing more dangerous than the encountering of a sudden squall of wind on their own small inland sea, or lake. And yet they must be supposed to have concerted a scheme for the subversion of the polity of their own nation, and for the construction of a religious system which should supplant every other religion and pervade the world—all a fabrication of falsehood, and yet so dexterously woven by these fishers of men, that no person has ever yet been able to detect a single flaw in their great net. This would be as miraculous as any miracle recorded in their narrative. But it deserves to be well noted, that, according to their own account, they had no such design or anticipation. They at first held the same opinions regarding the earthly sovereignty of the promised Messiah as their countrymen commonly held. The death and resurrection of Jesus formed no part of their plan. When He was crucified, they represent themselves as completely overwhelmed with disappointment and grief. “We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel.” “For as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that He must rise again from the dead.” This is proof positive that they were not such men, nor in such a condition, as to have suddenly planned, and successfully executed, the equally daring and skilful device of a pretended resurrection of Jesus—the very thing which the Jewish rulers were so anxious to guard against.

3. Those who came forward as witnesses of the fact of the resurrection of Jesus—a fact so unwelcome to the Roman governor, to the Jewish rulers, and to the whole nation—had no motive of a self-interested kind to induce them to affirm, and to persevere in affirming, it. They had, on the contrary, every reason to expect that they would have to encounter every kind of opposition which the baffled cruelty and excited malice and rage of the enemies of Jesus could devise and execute. They had even received from Christ Himself intimations of the tribulations they would have to endure for His sake. Of all this they had been forewarned, although for a time they might not have been able to comprehend how it could be caused, or should be possible. But when their minds had been fully

enlightened on the day of Pentecost,—when they were enabled to apprehend and apply clearly the predictions of Scripture,—when their own share in the sufferings and triumphs of the gospel became apparent to them,—while they saw manifestly that they were to meet persecutions of every kind, and endure hardships the most severe and trying, in maintaining their testimony relative to the life, teaching, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven of the Lord Jesus Christ,—they shrunk not, swerved not, from their arduous and mighty duty, but went forth in poverty, in hunger, in weakness, in weariness, in pain, a bleeding yet conquering band of martyrs for the truth. And what had they to gain by all this? Nothing in this world, as they well knew, but scorn, and hatred, and persecution, and death. “But,” an opponent may say, “they had the hope and prospect of eternal happiness in the world to come, to sustain and cheer them amid all their trials.” No! not so, according to their own doctrine, *on the supposition that their statements were false*, and that they *knew them to be false!* On that supposition—which is the supposition of those who accuse them of imposing a fiction on the world, which they had themselves fabricated, a “cunningly devised fable,”—on that supposition they were conscious liars; and yet, in their own writings, they had repeatedly denounced lying in the strongest terms, declaring it worthy of “damnation,” and that “all liars should have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” Is it possible to suppose that men ever did or could invent and propagate a falsehood, on account of which they were sure to encounter all the physical evils of this world, and at the same time doom themselves to eternal misery? To believe this, as the infidel is shut up to do, is to believe a miracle indeed; but a miracle of moral evil far more difficult to conceive than any miracle of good,—for it would be a miracle, in the strongest terms of any definition—“a violation of the moral laws of human nature;” and not only a suspension of them, and without any motive, but contrary to all the motives that can be conceived.

It is utterly impossible to conceive that, on the one hand, the apostles could have wilfully contrived such a fiction, and suffered and died in the attempt to force it on the world, contrary to all physical inducements; and, on the other, that they should have so suffered for a falsehood here, and taught that

all framers of falsehood must suffer for doing so for ever hereafter. If there be any validity in the argument from experience, then we may very safely say that no similar case has ever been experienced in the world, and that, therefore, no such supposition can be entertained. It would be impossible for even Hume to imagine a case more contrary to experience, and therefore, as he argues, more incapable of being believed. Let it be added, that while the apostles and early Christians were not ascetics, they were men of the most pure morality in character and life, and could not have the inducements which some pretenders to religion have displayed, in private licentiousness, as the compensating element in an external asceticism—such as monasteries and convents afford—such as Mormonism displays.

4. We regard the testimony of the apostles, then, as manifestly and undeniably truthful: they were not wilful deceivers; they did not make, nor love, nor circulate, a lie. But were they themselves deceived? It appears plainly enough that they must have had evidence, amply satisfactory to their own minds, before they could have ventured on, and persisted in, a course so full of foreseen peril, as that on which they did actually enter. Let it be borne in mind that the subject of their testimony was not an *opinion*, in regard to which they might be misled by some error of judgment, but a *fact*, of which they were perfectly cognisant, by the direct evidence of their own senses. To use the words of one of these witnesses, "The apostles whom He had chosen, to whom also He showed Himself after His suffering by many infallible proofs." "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard," said another of these plain, simple-minded, earnest, and truthful witnesses. They had enjoyed long, intimate, and most attractive and endearing acquaintance with Jesus previous to His death. They had associated with Him constantly for three years. They knew Him thoroughly in attitude, gesture, look, and aspect,—in every lineament of countenance, and every tone of voice,—by every token by which personal identity can be known. He had been dead only from Friday afternoon till Sabbath morning; so that the interval was far too short for them to have forgotten the slightest peculiarity in the personal appearance of their beloved Lord and Master.

Nor had His reappearance among them anything of a fleet-

ing and visionary character. He met with them, and conversed with them from time to time, during a period of forty days; meeting them in their apartment in Jerusalem; giving irresistible demonstration both of His identity with the Jesus of weeks, months, and years before, and of His still retaining the very body that had been nailed to the cross and pierced to the heart by a Roman spear, that He might convince the doubting disciple; and, on one occasion at least, partaking of food along with them. And at last they saw Him, in the self-same well-known human form, arise slowly from earth, and ascend towards heaven, till a cloud received Him out of their sight. They had thus obtained even abundant evidence addressed to their bodily senses, as well as to those thrilling emotions, whose intimations are many a time more convincing than even the evidence of the bodily senses, till eyes, and ears, and touch, and heart, and mind, even their entire being, body, soul, and spirit, felt and knew that He was indeed their own, their beloved, their adored Lord. "If," says an eminent reasoner,—“if any human testimony ever attained the certainty of demonstration, it is in this instance of our Lord's resurrection, which is established with far greater certainty by the evidence of the apostles than any other fact in the whole compass of history, sacred or profane.”

We hold, then, without the slightest hesitation, that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great central fact of Christianity, is established beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt. No man who believes that human testimony can establish any fact at all, is at liberty to cast doubt or discredit on that fact, without at the same time, and far more reasonably, doubting every fact that history has ever recorded,—nay, every fact that he has not himself witnessed,—and limiting his belief within the very narrow boundaries of his own sentient perceptions. Can he stop there? No; for the scepticism which has deprived him of the evidence of testimony, will not long leave him in possession of the evidence of his bodily senses. Helpless, hopeless man! doomed to shiver throughout his brief temporal span of existence in the unknown time of an unknown world, like a faint column of pale smoke wavering in the gusts of unknown breezes, till it melts into unknown and unlimited space. Will he not be persuaded to ponder seriously the deep mysteries of his own moral nature,—his haunting shapes of

grim crime, and pitiless remorse, and black despair, from whose deadly grasp no atheist's soul has ever been able to escape in its final struggle with the last enemy, death;—no, not the *last*, for there is a *second death*, which never dies, “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched?” From that death, Christ died to redeem every soul that believeth; and rose again, to manifest His conquest and victory over sin, death, the grave, and hell itself—a victory which also will be given through Him to every true believer. The truth of all this was felt and known by the apostles, and was their support and consolation during all their tribulations, their joy, their indestructible life, even in the very hour of torture and of death. Many thousands, throughout a period of now well-nigh 2000 years, have experienced the same, and gladly added their testimony to that of the apostles. If the hitherto deluded and gloomy sceptic will yet believe this glorious truth, on such irresistible testimony, he may soon have yet another—the Holy Spirit witnessing with his own spirit, that he, too, has been born again, and is an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ.

SEC. VIII. CESSATION OF MIRACLES. WHEN? WHY?—

SUMMARY.

Before passing from the subject of miracles, to which we have thought it right to devote considerable time and attention, there are yet one or two topics which demand consideration. When we use the word *miracle* in its well-known and strictly theological sense, as not merely something very wonderful, but some supernatural event wrought by God Himself, and in attestation of the divine commission of His messengers to man, we are in no danger of being misunderstood. At the same time, it is right to know and remember, that there are more words than one in the original Scriptures which, in our version, are rendered commonly by the word *miracle*. There are *σημεῖα, τέρατα, δυνάμεις*; and these are generally rendered indiscriminately, miracles, as though they were strictly identical in meaning. The word *miracle*, however, in its theological sense, expresses sufficiently what they all mean in common, while each one indicates specially some one of the proper constituents of a true miracle. When the Apostle Paul was defending his right to be regarded by the Corinthians as an apostle, he says, “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all

patience, in *signs*, and *wonders*, and *mighty deeds*," using all the three terms as uniting to constitute the signs or proofs of his apostleship. The word *σημεῖον*, rendered *a sign*, implies some supernatural event, having *typical* or *symbolical* meaning, whether it appear very wonderful or not. The *τέρατα* are supernatural *wonders*, fitted to excite surprise, or even terror; but it is to their character as *wonders* that attention is chiefly directed. The *δυνάμεις*, rendered, in the passage above quoted, "*mighty deeds*," intimated chiefly works of supernatural *power*, without much reference to any deeper meaning, although not excluding such reference; but the word *δύναμις* is often used merely to indicate *power*, without indicating that such power must be regarded as either supernatural, or having any symbolical meaning. By combining these meanings, we find that they contain and express the constituent elements of the full idea of a true miracle. They give us this idea, that true miracles are works of wonderful and supernatural power and symbolical meaning, wrought by God Himself, in attestation of the commission given by Him to His inspired ambassadors, to declare some new revelation of His will to mankind. We might very safely adopt the definition thus obtained from a right use of the words of Scripture itself, which, as will easily be seen, does not differ essentially from the definition which we have given, and attempted to define, not unsuccessfully, we hope.

A somewhat difficult question may here arise relative to what should be understood by the term *supernatural*. If it mean no more than *above the known laws of nature*, it may seem liable to the objection, that this is only an appeal to ignorance, or may be no more than an appeal to ignorance. Many a thing which a man of science can easily know and do, would seem to be *above the laws of nature* to an uneducated man, and would, indeed, be above the *known* laws of nature to him, for he was ignorant of any such laws. It may seem almost presumptuous to say what *are* the laws of nature, as no man can venture to say what great general laws may yet be discovered, some of which might explain events now regarded as supernatural. In order to escape from this difficulty, perhaps to evade it, various efforts are made. "Only suppose," says one, "the Deity equally present in all His works, and equally active;" and this, he assumes, would be a complete explanation of the "whole course of providence, and the whole order of nature."

Another assumes or asserts, "that the true miracle is a higher and purer nature coming down out of the world of untroubled harmonies into this world of ours, which so many discords have jarred and disturbed, and bringing this back again, though it be but for one prophetic moment, into harmony with that higher." Fairly pressed to its extreme, this notion becomes identical with that view which regards all the events termed supernatural as only appeals to our ignorance, since they would cease to be deemed supernatural, if we were adequately acquainted with that higher nature, of which they are special and unexpected manifestations. Still another says, "It is no less a miracle, when the lower law of nature is modified by a higher law at the exact time at which it pleases God to make a revelation of His will, than if the nature which is known to us were modified by His immediate interference." Such arguments entirely destroy the proper idea of the supernatural, by introducing the hypothetical notion, that all may be merely the action of unknown higher nature. And yet the authors quoted from have no such design. Still less is it their design to introduce a view which might be proved to involve a species of pantheism or fatalism,—a result from which they would recoil, even with horror, and rather abandon their explanation than incur that hazard.

Others there are, who, fully aware of this danger, attempt to avoid it by terming miracles not only supernatural, but *contranatural*, asserting, at the same time, that evil spirits have the power to produce works of a supernatural character. This theory is, in our opinion, scarcely less hazardous than the one which it attempts to remedy. The idea conveyed by the word *contranatural* is scarcely, if at all, different from that definition, "a violation of the laws of nature"—by availing himself of which, Hume was able to do so much evil,—and is equally open to a similar perversion. Besides, as the laws of nature are what they are, because God so constituted them, to term miracles *contranatural*, and yet wrought by God, certainly seems to imply God contradicting Himself. But this term is introduced in order to admit the supernatural agency of evil spirits; and it is thought that this admission of their agency is necessary in order to receive the testimony of Scripture. We do not think so, but the very opposite. Scripture does not ascribe true miracles to evil spirits, or wicked men in league with them, but regards

them as delusions, enchantments, and counterfeits only. This we have shown in the case of the Egyptian magicians. It would be easier still to show it in the case of the enchantress of Endor. When reference is made to the “wonders” and “miracles” said to be wrought by “the beast” and the “false prophet,” in the book of Revelation, it ought to be also noticed that the word so rendered is, in each instance, *σημεία*, *signs of a symbolical character*,—which is exactly the right word in a book so entirely symbolical. It should also be noticed, that when they are said to be wrought by the “false prophet,” they cannot be understood to be anything else than “false signs,” and therefore not true miracles,—just such *counterfeits* as an artful deceiver might produce. This view is corroborated by the language of the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Thessalonians: “Whose coming (*παρουσία*) is after the working (*ἐνέργειαν*) of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,”—*ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ σημείοις καὶ τέρασι ψεύδους*. In this passage it is plain that even the grammatical construction of the words requires that *ψεύδους*, of falsehood—lying, or false—be applied to all the preceding terms, and not to the last only, “with all lying or false power, and signs and wonders,” characterizing the whole as lying, false, or counterfeit. None of these passages, then, nor all of them put together, teach that evil spirits, or even Satan himself, “the father of lies,” as Christ terms him, can work a true miracle. We feel ourselves fully warranted, therefore, on full consideration, to retain our own definition, that “*a miracle is a sudden effect produced without the operation of known causes, by the direct interposition of divine power, anticipating, suspending, or transcendently surpassing the ordinary known laws and sequences of nature.*”

Something should perhaps be said relative to what are often called *special interpositions of Providence*. We are by no means disposed to reject the idea of special interpositions of Providence; but we do not regard them as miracles, in the proper sense of that term. Neither are we at all disposed to assert that the idea of a general providence and that of special providences are the same,—absolutely identical, as some have ventured to affirm. To quote again a statement already alluded to, “Only suppose the Deity equally present in all His works, equally active in all, and providence no longer admits of a twofold apprehension. It is simply, in every possible mode of its con-

ception, the agency of God." This, we think, is equally false in philosophy and in theology; though it might do very well for the prose of a line or two from Pope's *Essay on Man*.¹ It would remove all *second causes* out of the universe, and leave nothing but the FIRST CAUSE to operate everywhere and in everything, rendering human agency impossible, human responsibility impossible, sin impossible, and resolving itself into pantheism. But who that has learned to know that he is himself a *cause*, though not FIRST CAUSE, can doubt the existence of *second causes*? And who can venture to say that God cannot establish a subordinate class of second causes in the physical forces and adjustments of physical nature, which shall act throughout nature *mediately*, and be acted upon and employed by Himself *immediately*? And further, who would venture to dispute—bearing in mind that God is not an infinite necessity, but a personal Being, with intelligent and moral will—that God can will to produce varied action in all second causes when He pleases, without any change in their proper nature, for the special benefit of His moral creature, man,—the general providence being the maintenance of their general character, the special providence being its special application? But yet these would not be miracles, in the right meaning of that word; for the known laws of nature might still be employed, though applied specially in that case, or in those cases. They might even amount to *counteractions* or *suspensions*, apparently,—that is, so far as man could see,—and yet only be the special application of known antagonisms in nature, and therefore not supernatural, however recondite their origin, and however difficult of explanation by man. The actual existence of Satanic agency I do not doubt; but I firmly believe that it can operate only in the region of second causes, and chiefly in the moral world. Even thus it is a terrible power. It may deceive with "lying signs and wonders" those who are willing to be deceived, and may sorely tempt many others, but it can put forth no agency by which it can compel those who *pray* and *resist*.

Another question which has been thought to be somewhat difficult relates to the *cessation of miracles*. Have miracles actually ceased to be wrought? If so, when did they cease? and what was the reason why they did cease, since they seem to be

¹ "All are but parts of a stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul."

still needed for the conversion of the world? To these questions we shall offer a few considerations in reply. First of all, let it constantly be borne in mind—what has been already proved—that miracles are the peculiar and proper attestation given directly by God to persons commissioned by Him to communicate some *new* truths to man, affecting the glory of God and human welfare; and that they are not given, and never have been given, merely as additional corroboration of what is already known, and has been so far believed on its own proper testimony, still existing. Neither Christ nor any of the apostles wrought any of their miracles in support of the Mosaic dispensation and its known and admitted truths; although, in some instances, these miracles were said to be the fulfilment of what had been then predicted. In such cases, however, it might be said that the prediction was the miracle, rather than its fulfilment; and in some of them the fulfilment was merely the result of a peculiar arrangement of second causes, such as the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, caused by the census at that special juncture. It may fairly be added, that in all such instances it was the previous prediction that gave special value to the fulfilment, and that in so far, and thus viewed, it was not the gospel that gave authority to the Mosaic dispensation, but rather the Mosaic which transmitted its authority to the gospel dispensation, while manifesting their divine harmony.

Next, let it be observed, that the power of working miracles was not given to the apostles in such a manner that they could use that power at their own discretion, and whether such use might bear directly upon the accrediting of their divine commission or not. Christ evidently possessed this power in its utmost plenitude, and wrought miracles when and how He pleased, because it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell—even the fulness of the Godhead, which it was impossible for Him to misuse, because He and the Father are one. But even He did not work any miracles directly on His own account. His poverty, and hunger, and thirst, and weariness, and pain, and agony, and death, were all patiently endured, as they had been voluntarily undertaken; and while He saved others, Himself He would not save. Miracles in great profusion, and in a continuous course, He wrought, because it was necessary so to prove that He was *the* “Teacher come from God,” and that God was always with Him; so that all His

teaching must be always infinitely true, and righteous, and holy, and good. But the apostles did not, and could not, hold a commission so unlimited. They, too, required the attestation of miracles to prove the divine authority of their teaching; and this attestation was given to them in the measure and to the extent required. But the power to work miracles was not absolutely under their own control. They could work the miracle only when the inspiration of the Holy Spirit within them enabled them to know, that it was consistent with the will and design of God that such a miracle should be wrought. Christ came to suffer as a substitute for man; and He did not choose to avoid the slightest particle of that suffering. *They* were not substitutes for man in the same manner, yet they had to follow His example, drink of His cup, and be baptized with His baptism; and since they might have put forth some miraculous power to avert this, had they been left to their own discretion, and might thus have perverted the gift, no such unlimited power was entrusted to them; but they acted as the Spirit prompted and gave the power. Such a limitation tended also to give a character most manifestly disinterested to their whole mission. Paul was enabled to heal innumerable diseases of innumerable persons among whom he went preaching the gospel; but he could not heal his own beloved and attached friend, whom he had to leave behind him sick, and journey on alone; and he could not heal his own bruised and lacerated frame, when scourged, and even stoned, by his enemies.

Further, the power of working miracles, or, rather, the miracles which divine power wrought by them, were the direct and necessary proof of their authority, not only to preach and teach, but especially to write such epistles as should become fully accredited portions of the inspired word of God. As there is evidence sufficient to prove that they were empowered to work miracles only when the Spirit enabled them to know that such was the will of God, so there is reason to believe that they wrote those epistles which complete the gospel record, not when they pleased, but when the full inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for that end given, enabled them to know that it was the will of God they should then write, and what was His will to be so written. This measure of inspiration must have had, as we fully believe, its special times and seasons as distinctly marked as the special occasions for the working of miracles; and we no more think

that any epistle was written superfluously, than that any miracle was wrought superfluously; or that any epistle so inspired was lost, than that any miracle was wrought in vain. The working of miracles we hold to have been necessary to the authentication and authorization of the epistles; and when the whole of the *new* gospel truths and doctrines had been fully given to man by Christ and His inspired apostles, then it was in fitting harmony with the divine procedure that miracles should cease. God withdrew both the commission and His own divine attestation to it, when it had been fully given, and He did not intend to give anything *new*. We may have more to say on this point when we come to treat directly and specially of the doctrine of *inspiration*: at present we are dealing chiefly with *miracles*.

It may be right, however, even in connection with this special point, to direct attention to the fact, that the miracles wrought by the apostles, at the prompting and by the power of the Holy Spirit, give the stamp of the divine authority *as directly to their teaching as to the teaching of Christ*. A doctrine taught in an inspired epistle, by a man to whom God gives the attestation of miracles, is as much the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as if it were contained in one of the Gospels, and had been pronounced by the lips of Jesus Himself. In each case it has the witness of the Father, and is the word of the Spirit, and should be received with equal reverence and faith, as the word of God. This view would set aside the daring and offensive cavils of some Socinians and others, who seek to make a distinction between the Gospels and the Epistles, and impiously exclaim, "Not Paul, but Jesus."

Another consideration of an historical character now appears. Both the power of working miracles, and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit, were given to the apostles personally; first, by Jesus symbolically, when He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" and next, when the Holy Spirit was poured out fully upon them on the day of Pentecost. But to the apostles, and *to them only*, was given the power of communicating the Spirit Himself, and the gifts of the Spirit, by the laying on of their hands. Simon the magician wished to purchase this power; but his proffered money perished with him, and he could not obtain it. We find Paul asking certain new disciples whether they had yet received the Spirit; and upon finding that they had not, and even were ignorant of the

Spirit's personality,—having been disciples of John the Baptist only,—baptizing them anew with Christian baptism, which John's was not, and then laying his hands on them, and they received the Spirit. Other indications there are, not numerous, but similar in character, all tending to prove that the gift of the Holy Spirit, in its miraculously manifested form, was communicated by the apostles only, and not transmitted to others by those who had so received that miraculous gift. It follows, that these miraculous gifts ceased when the last of the apostles died; and it seems to follow with equal certainty, that then also miracles ceased.

According to this view, the power of miracles could not have continued longer than till the death of the Apostle John; and with him also ceased the additions to the records of divinely inspired truth. This remarkable concurrence of fact and argument seems an abundant proof that the view which we have given is the true view of the case. It shows the time when the power of working miracles ceased: when the last of the apostles died;—and it states the reason why they ceased: because God had by them communicated all the new truths which He intended to teach mankind, and because there were no longer any of the apostles alive, through whom alone He had been pleased to convey these gifts and to teach these truths, and to whom He had given His high commission and its miraculous attestations.

It is right now to mention another fact, also historical, that since the death of the Apostle John, or since the close of the first century (the dates are the same), there is not a single instance of a well-authenticated miracle having been wrought. We do not say an instance as well authenticated as are those recorded in the Gospels and the Epistles, for this was impossible, since there were no longer inspired records to give equal authentication; but we say, not so well authenticated by a sufficient number of sufficiently credible witnesses as might have sufficed for historical evidence. Legends of pretended miracles there are in plenty; but in not one single instance are they above suspicion,—in not one single instance could they stand the tests, the clear and strong criteria, which the miracles of the Bible so easily bear, and triumphantly exhibit. And when we turn to the wild and fabulous legendary miracles of monastic and Popish writers, we feel at once that such absurdly

monstrous and darkly superstitious stories could never have obtained any measure of belief, except among people of almost incredibly gross and foolish ignorance. Why the Papal system had allowed the people to sink into such a state of ignorant barbarism, would open up a different inquiry, into which our proper duty does not permit us to enter. But this at least we may state, that no such ignorance existed at the Christian era itself, when the gospel miracles were wrought and recorded, and could not have come into existence, had the Bible not been allowed to become an almost forgotten book. Further, as the existence of a counterfeit may always be regarded as proof of the previous existence of what is counterfeited, so these pretended miracles may be admitted as proofs so far, that there had previously been true miracles, of which they were coarse counterfeits. Still further, as the *true miracles* had been wrought by divine power, to attest the *new truths* which it was God's pleasure to communicate, so these "lying signs and wonders"—these *counterfeit miracles*—had a strangely corresponding relation to the *false doctrines* newly introduced by the corrupt Romish system, and bear the fatal stamp of *Antichrist* on their foreheads.

Another kindred idea deserves to be mentioned. In every age there are men of either a stern and gloomily ascetic and fanatical temper, or of a glowing and enthusiastic disposition. Neither of these classes of men can be satisfied with the common aspect of things around them, or with the character of truths commonly believed. Neither fanaticism nor enthusiasm appeared among the apostles themselves, though we can see proofs in the inspired Epistles, that men of such tempers had even then begun to disturb the churches. After the death of the apostles, such men would obtain more influence than they had previously possessed. And as these men were not empowered by God to work true miracles, they would almost of necessity simulate that power, in order to gain credit to their opinions, and secure partisans. Were we to follow this thought, and produce historical illustrations, as we very easily could in abundance, we could point out the origin and trace the progress of nearly every heretical and Popish innovation which has crept into and corrupted the true church. Ever since the period of the Reformation this could easily be done. Nay more, our own age could furnish several melancholy instances

of these aberrations of people, whose fanatical or impulsive temperament could not be contented with the simplicity of the gospel, but must restlessly seek after something new and startling. We might point out the very strange delusion of Joanna Southcote; but it is enough to name it. We might direct attention to the pretended gifts of the Spirit and the unknown tongues, so prevalent in the west of Scotland some years ago. We might mention with equal shame and sorrow the name of the Rev. Edward Irving, as a specially mournful instance of a greatly gifted and truly pious man, led away by a highly imaginative mind, and deluded by the insinuating snares and fawning adulations of cunning persons, who felt that they needed a mighty man for a leader. Or we might refer to the wild mediæval fantasies of Puseyism, at this moment leading the mind of England so far astray—so rapidly Rome-ward. But we merely mention these instances, as illustrating a common source of counterfeit miracles.

It has been our endeavour to take a somewhat comprehensive and yet close view of the subject of miracles,—comprehensive enough to enable us to perceive the full scope of the evidence which they afford, in proof of the truth of revelation, and yet so close and exact as to give opportunity of examining and answering the objections usually urged against them by the opponents of revelation. The main difficulty in such an attempt arises from the necessity of condensation; since the endeavour to be brief is liable to end in becoming obscure, or in omitting something which ought to have been mentioned. If, however, the *definition* which I have given has been proved to be both full and correct,—expressing the idea of a true miracle clearly and adequately, containing all that is necessary to a right conception of it, and nothing either superfluous or erroneous,—it will be found that we have obtained a principle—a truth-power—a master-key—by means of which we may further prosecute the investigation of the subject, and be able, in every case, either to solve the difficulty, or at least to silence the gainsayer. We must bear constantly in mind, that a miracle is not intended to prove the *truth of a doctrine*, but to *accredit a messenger from God*; that as every true miracle is wrought by the *direct interposition of God Himself*, for the purpose of giving divine testimony to the commission which that messenger has received, so the miracle itself must have in it a *moral*

element suited to the character of God, and generally typical or symbolical, or predictive of the message; and that as the *first* proper miracle and direct manifestation of God was *creation*, against which Satan directed the lie of sin, or spurious miracle of destruction, so the *second* and greater miracle is the *new creation*, or *salvation by a divine Redeemer*; and its chief miracles are the incarnation, the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the coming of the Holy Spirit, conversion, and judgment; while every subordinate gospel miracle will be found shining clear and intelligible, in the holy light of these divine and everlasting truths.

CHAPTER IV.

PROPHECY.



THE section of external evidence, on the consideration of which we are now to enter, is one of very great importance, and justly demands the most earnest and thoughtful attention. It relates to the subject of *prophecy*, which is intimately related to that of *miracles*,—the two constituting, in their mutually corroborating power, the most direct and incontestable proof of the truth of revelation. This will appear as we proceed; but in the meantime it will tend to render our path clear and open, if we give a few sentences to define and explain the subject.

SEC. I. NATURE OF PROPHECY—DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION.

There is no necessary obscurity in the term *prophecy* itself, when used according to its direct and proper meaning, to *foretell* or *predict*. But this meaning, although the most direct and simple, does not contain the full scriptural idea. A *prophet*, in the full scriptural sense of the term, is a person commissioned by God to reveal His will to man,—to deliver the divine message, whatever were its import—whether predictive, or didactic, or preceptive. Moses was a prophet, equally when delivering the law to the Israelites at God's command, as when foretelling the sore calamities that should befall them if they should violate its precepts. When Moses was sent to Pharaoh, Aaron was appointed to be a prophet from Moses to Pharaoh, to declare to the king of Egypt what Moses should say to him and command him to say to Pharaoh. Even in the writings of those who are specifically designated *prophets* in the Old Testament Scriptures, very considerable portions contain no predictions, but abound in strong censures of evil, and exhortations to what is good. In the New Testa-

ment the sense of declaring the will of God to men by precept, by doctrine, by preaching, becomes the predominant meaning of the term *prophecy*; and that sense came to be adopted by Christian writers at an early period, and still continues to be used.

There is a peculiarly intimate relation between miracles and prophecy, as we have already intimated, and respecting which some remarks may here be made. To use the language of Dr. Wardlaw: "Every prophecy is a miracle, and every miracle is a prophecy. The prophecy is a miracle of knowledge; the miracle is a prophecy of power." The deep idea upon which this antithetic statement rests, is this, that as it is not in the power of any man to work a miracle, that being the direct intervention of divine power, so no man could know when a miracle would be wrought unless God told him; and that information would itself be a direct divine intervention, therefore itself a miracle. When any man says, "I have a message from God to you," we ask him, "How shall we know that you *have* a message from God?" He answers, "I will call upon God to bear witness to the commission I bear, by doing what no created being can do, and if He does it not, believe me not." He then states what will be done, and prays to God to do it. His stating what will be done is a "prophecy of power,"—not his own power, but that of God; and the prediction is a miracle of knowledge that God means to do it. Should the prediction refer to events future, but not in themselves miraculous, it would still be a miracle of knowledge; for no one can foreknow the future but God who rules the future. But if that prediction relate to what is miraculous, then its fulfilment, happen when it may, will, at the moment of its fulfilment, be both a present miracle and a present testimony to the divine commission of a prophet who may have been dead centuries before. But this topic deserves more full statement and illustration than we can here properly give it.

Prophecy we regard as not less absolutely the prerogative of God than *miracles*. There is a species of far-seeing sagacity in some men, connected with a deep knowledge of principles, which enables them to anticipate the future in many instances, and to a remarkable degree. We know what human nature can do, and dare, and endure, when fairly roused and strongly in earnest, from what it has done, and dared, and endured; and

when we are aware of powerful principles at work in human nature, and perceive the direction in which they are working, we may with considerable confidence anticipate the result. But this is not prophecy. Again, so far as we believe the Bible, and understand its principles of divine and eternal truth, relative to God's moral government of the world and righteous retribution, we may very confidently anticipate the application of these principles to any course of human conduct sooner or later. But this is not prophecy; though sometimes such application boldly made in special instances, and singularly realized, has been regarded as something akin to prophecy. It might seem presumptuous were we very decidedly to specify any limitation to possible prophecy; yet we may be allowed to say, that as God alone can know His own decrees and determinations, so God alone can foretell the future,—that prophecy requires as direct an interposition of God as miracles do,—and that as miracles are wrought only in attestation of a commission to declare some new truth of a religious kind, so prophecies are uttered only in connection with some new truths of a religious kind. This view cuts off at once all those floating, frivolous, traditionary so-called prophecies which have no connection with religious truths, but serve only to excite the idle wonderment of idle minds in an idle hour.

Our present purpose is to discuss the subject of *prophecy* in the special aspect of *external evidence to the truth of revelation*; and while this need not prevent us from directing attention occasionally to its moral character and to its special structure, yet it is chiefly to its most simple and direct nature as the *foretelling of future events*, that we mean to direct our attention. Even this somewhat limited view of the subject requires us to state and explain certain important peculiarities in the structure and style of Scripture prophecy, without which it would be impossible to obtain any clear views of the subject.

Whenever we begin to look somewhat closely into the subject of prophecy, we are struck with certain diversities which we cannot but observe. Some prophecies are expressed in the most plain and direct language, foretelling something which is to take place, with all the simplicity and distinctness that might characterize a narrative of the past. Others are expressed in a style of great splendour both of diction and of imagery, some of them transcending all the lyrical poetry that

has ever been produced by the highest genius in any age or country. Others, still, are not remarkable for poetic power and beauty, but are expressed in what might be called an enigmatical style, rendering the meaning obscure and difficult. This manifest diversity suggests that they ought to be arranged under different heads, or kinds, according to these manifest diversities. We would accordingly thus arrange them :—

1. *Narrative.* 2. *Typical.* 3. *Symbolical.*

1. The *narrative* kind of prophecy is that in which direct intimations are given of future events, stating in express terms that certain events shall assuredly take place. Nothing can be more plain and direct than the language in which it was foretold to Abraham, that his posterity should inherit as their own the land of Canaan, in which he was himself only a stranger and a sojourner, and that this should take place after they had been strangers and oppressed in a land not theirs for four hundred years. This was prophecy very direct, and beyond the power or sagacity of man to have even imagined; and it was distinctively what we have called *narrative prophecy*. There are many other instances of narrative prophecy, both in the earlier and in the later periods of the Jewish history; and it may be remarked that prophecy is cast into the narrative form, or takes the most direct expression without metaphorical language, when it relates chiefly to historical events, of a nature which Divine Providence alone could direct and accomplish. When, for example, Moses was commissioned to foretell the calamities that should fall upon the Israelites, if they should violate or neglect the law and covenant of Jehovah, the predictions are fearfully direct, so that they cannot be misunderstood; but they cannot be simulated, for no combination among men can produce famine, pestilence, and hostile invasion by a foreign enemy; while these are the judgments foretold. We may remark in passing, that prophecies of future blessings or judgments must take the form of *contingent predictions*, not because such events are in their own nature *contingent*, as some continental expositors suggest, or *conditional*, but because they are *judicial*, and have such relation to man's conduct as all legal sanctions must have, enforcing, by promises of reward or threatenings of punishment, the due observance of the precept or command to which they are conjoined.

It may be expedient to direct more than a passing remark

to this topic ; for there is considerable importance in having a right view of the question, "how far prophecy is *absolute* or *conditional* in its announcements." There is an inevitable relation between this topic and that relating to the *decrees* of God. The Calvinistic theory of the decrees of God regards them as *absolute* ; so far, therefore, as prophecy reveals these *absolute decrees*, it must be *absolute* also. But many modern authors, and some of them authors of high distinction, hold prophecy to be *conditional*, and having always an *ethical purpose*, on which it is suspended. This theory, traced to its legitimate logical consequences, would be found in contradiction to Calvinism. It is true that Calvinistic writers have not always avoided the use of expressions which seem at variance with their own principles ; but it is also true that their language and the purport of their arguments have been misunderstood, and inferences drawn which they did not hold or teach. It has been said, for example, that the older Calvinists regarded prophecy as conditional ; and this view of their opinions has been supported, by referring to their well-known distinction between God's *secret* and *revealed* will,—which has been regarded as equivalent to a distinction "between God's *real intention* and His *revealed purpose*." But this assumed distinction is not identical with that of such Calvinists as Turretine. He, and the able theologians of his age, had observed that in Scripture the will of God is spoken of variedly—sometimes as being equivalent to His *decree*, and sometimes to His *command*,—and they expressed this by making use of the distinction of "*voluntas decreti*" and "*voluntas precepti*,"—the *decreeing will* and the *commanding will*. The same thing is meant by them when they use the expressions, "*voluntas beneplaciti*" and "*voluntas signi* ;" as also when they use the terms "*voluntas arcana*" and "*voluntas revelata*." But in no instance did they mean that there was, or could be, any contradiction between the secret and the revealed will of God, as would seem to be implied when men speak of a "distinction between God's real intention and His declared purpose." "Conditional promises and threatenings," says Turretine, "do not infer that God's decrees are conditional, because they do not belong to God's decreeing will (*voluntas decreti*), but to His commanding will (*voluntas precepti*), and are added to the divine commands, for the purpose of exciting men to obedience."

The same idea might be expressed and illustrated in a manner perhaps more adapted to modern thought and language, by referring to the distinction between *laws sovereign* and *laws judicial*. A *sovereign law* is a decree of *absolute will*, and *rightful and efficient power*, producing what it utters. A *judicial law* is a decree of *order* only, and declares that *if* a certain event takes place, another event *shall certainly follow it*; but it does not determine that either of these events shall take place at all. "Let there be light," is a *sovereign law*; and "light was," as the effect. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," is a *judicial law*; but it does not determine that any soul shall sin,—it rather warns against sinning, while it determines, as a decree of order, that sin shall be followed with death.

Creation, predestination, salvation, are sovereign laws. All promises and threatenings are judicial laws. The former—the *sovereign laws*—belong necessarily and essentially to the province of the *divine nature and character*, and become known to us only when they have become facts,—existing previously within the *secret will of God*. The latter—the *judicial laws*—belong to the relation between God and man, include the whole province of human duty, reveal to man the dread sanctions of law and order, and are contingent or conditional in no other sense than the actions of men are contingent or conditional, securing, so far as man can apprehend, the certainty of God's intentions, on the one hand, and man's free agency and responsibility, on the other. Prophecy may be related to either the one or the other of these forms of divine law. When it is related to the *sovereign law*, its statements will be *direct and absolute*; and this is generally the case when it relates to the events about to befall nations, to whom no revelation had been given. But when it is related to the *judicial law*, its statements will be generally conditional, expressed as *threatenings* or *promises*, because it then refers to the sanctions connected with revealed law and commanded duty.

Let these principles and distinctions be clearly understood, and constantly remembered, and they will be found to give a master-key to the whole difficulties of prophetic interpretation.

2. The *typical* kind of prophecy next demands attention.

On the whole subject of typology, I may refer to the very able, elaborate, and complete work of Principal Fairbairn, both as fully comprehending all that need be known, or is known, regarding the true nature and design of types, and setting aside innumerable crudities which had obtained credit and currency in consequence of being repeated from age to age without due examination ; and also as giving clearness, force, and soundness to an important region of theology.

Every type is a prophecy, communicated in a peculiar and impressive manner by *action*, rather than by language, although language also may be employed. The theory of typology, when rescued from mere *fancy*, or from the vague and loose aspect of *historical analogy*, in which men have so long been accustomed to indulge to such excess, that any and every Old Testament event was frequently called a type of Christ, till Origen himself might have been astonished,—that theory, rightly and rationally understood, seems to rest upon and involve the following principles :—1. That it is not fanciful, capricious, arbitrary, but contains a divine truth, or idea, or doctrine, and is a vivid method employed by God to communicate that truth to the mind of man. 2. The *visible representation* of that truth, embodied in action, and bearing a profound relation to the truth so embodied. *Sacrifice* is a type ; and, as a typical action, it represents the death of a substitute in the room of man, and on account of his sin. The offering of Isaac, though his death did not take place, was typical of the actual sacrifice of Christ ; and also of the deliverance of man thereby, since it contained, as an inner type, the deliverance of Isaac by the substitute which God provided. 3. The type was not only a visible representation of a divine truth, but the *definitive realization* of that truth by means of the type and its concomitant arrangements ; and this might be the case whether the embodiment were by means of *things*, or *animals*, or *persons*, and *unconsciously on their part*. In truth, the type was all the more perfect that it was effected without the consciousness of the agency in which it was embodied, and by which it was represented, for in such cases there could be nothing of design in it but God's design. 4. The full meaning of the type might be rendered increasingly obvious by accompanying prophetic statements, as was frequently the case ; but the *absolute realization* of the divine truth which formed the primordial basis of all

types, was effected at last by means of the divine idea becoming incarnate. Thus were type and antitype united and realized; and this is, indeed, in the most perfect sense of the term, *a new creation*.

The extensive application of these principles will be at once apparent. The Bible contains *two* great primordial truths,—the one relating to the *sin and fall of man*, the other to the *redemption*. The entire history of mankind is related, more or less directly, to both of these truths. The sacred history of man, as contained in the Bible, is related directly to both of them, even in its narrative parts; and very specially in all its religious institutions, and in its whole region of prophecy. But in all its religious institutions it is typical, therefore also prophetic. The Hebrew race, nation, polity, and religion are also all and throughout typical; but the specially typical aspect which they bear is often not directly that of relation to the Redeemer Himself, but to His redeemed people throughout the world, in all ages and countries,—not directly to Christ, but to Christianity. This view alone would serve to rescue much of the Old Testament typology from the forced construction so frequently employed to bring it into some sort of relation to Christ, when there would be no difficulty in the application of the typical event to Christianity and Christian nations and churches. Not only so, but the deep principle embodied in the ancient event, rendering it a type, might be brought out definitely and shown to be applicable to modern events, and fitted to regulate them, by a profound analogy, in conformity with the will of God.

3. The *symbolical* kind of prophecy must also be explained. A symbol, as that term is used with reference to prophecy, is a *divine idea* rendered visible, designedly for the purpose of representing something which can be apprehended only by the highest faculties of the human mind, in their highest exercise,—by the *imagination*, by *reason*, by *faith*. In the most common instances of this kind of prophecy the language is usually what is called *figurative*, or *metaphorical*, or *poetical*. Many of the prophecies are almost entirely expressed in this peculiar form, and may often be termed lyrical odes, of the very highest merit even as poetry. Some of the psalms, and some of the prophecies of Isaiah and others, are superior to anything in all the writings of all the poets of Greece and Rome, even as

poetry, while they retain their peculiar value as prophecy. In the case of these the direct and external appeal is to the *imagination*; and no man can be a fitting interpreter of such parts of Scripture who has not himself at least so much of poetic genius as to apprehend the peculiar nature and meaning of poetic language. To interpret those passages, it is necessary to reduce the poetical or figurative language to the level of plain prose, and then see what that directly means; otherwise the interpreter will make sad havoc with sense in applying the living language of inspired poetry, when he tries to explain how mountains leap, and valleys laugh, and seas clap their hands.

Passing beyond the fervent region of poetical *imagination*, symbolical prophecy rises into the loftier sphere of *reason* and *faith*. Abstract truths, great historical events, or spiritual doctrines are represented, not so much by *actions*—for these belong chiefly to the *typical* region, though they may be also *symbolical*,—but by *representations*, which have commonly no directly intelligible meaning in themselves, but represent some future event, or profound idea, or solemn spiritual truth. The great visions seen by Daniel are symbolical; and there can be no doubt as to their meaning, since they are explained in the same prophetic book that records them. The Apocalypse, or book of Revelation, is also *symbolical*, not only in parts, but throughout, as I fully believe; and with the instance of the book of Daniel before me, I do not believe that the book of Revelation can be interpreted till all its symbols shall have been translated into common language, and that common language then interpreted. The language of *symbolical* prophecy will always have an air and character of great sublimity, both in consequence of its very vagueness and obscurity, and in consequence of the greatness or the profound importance of the truth which it contains; but it may be expressed in perfectly simple words, without any of the peculiar beauty of the poetically symbolical prophecies. The Spirit of God, by whom these peculiar symbols were chosen, can alone give the absolutely certain interpretation, either directly, as was done to Daniel, or by the ultimate fulfilment of the symbolical prediction, when all that was obscure in the symbol will dissolve from around the reality.

There is a distinction between a *type* and a *symbol*, which has

been too much overlooked ; and this neglect or unconsciousness of that difference has allowed much confusion to enter into the writings of many an able expositor of Scripture. A *symbol* is a divine truth, or idea, or doctrine, or future event, designedly rendered visible, but in some mysterious form which represents the *abstraction*, not its concrete successive stages and relations. These concrete successive stages and relations may be all contained in the one great vision or appearance, and may extend over centuries ; but time is not any element in what is rendered visible, though time may be specified, if an explanation be given. A *type* is a divine truth, *idea*, or *doctrine* embodied in *action*, and generally containing successive stages, relations, and details, predicting something of a sacred or future nature by acting its analogy. A *type* may be perfectly intelligible in itself, with a life and action of its own, consistent throughout, although its typical meaning should not be perceived or understood ; while it acquires vastly increased significancy when it is understood in its relation to its antitype. The *symbol* is, *enigmatic appearance*. The *type* is, *representative life and action*. In many instances the *typical action* has also a *symbolical meaning*, but one of the *figurative* kind, allied to *metaphorical action* ; but the highest instances of the symbolical vision or appearance have rarely, if ever, anything in them of a *typical character*, or of *concrete action and detail*. God alone can constitute symbols, and form types : man can neither institute, alter, nor abrogate them. God may so construct the type as to convey much additional instruction by analogy : man may trace these analogies, and use them for illustration ; but analogies are not types, and still less are analogies symbols. The *type* naturally, and even necessarily, continues in living and permanent existence till the antitype comes, and is embodied and realized. The *symbol* may disappear, except so far as it is recorded, especially when it is a prophecy, or of the nature of a prophecy, intimating or displaying a truth yet future ; but the fact of its having been seen and recorded may enable us to perceive the deep significancy of the event so wonderfully revealed.

One or two remarks may be legitimately made before we pass from these explanatory statements. Since the typical naturally continues in living existence only till the antitypical appears, and then passes away, it follows, that all of the Mosaic dispensation which was typical necessarily passed away when

the Christian dispensation began ; but it also follows, that nothing else of it can certainly be said to have passed away, except what was typical. Before its realization, the type is of the nature of *prediction* ; if continued afterwards, it becomes *commemoration*. All its social, moral, and religious principles and truths still remain, and are still binding. And, on the other hand, whatever permanent truths have obtained a symbolical manifestation, since these truths are permanent, the symbolical mode of representing them must be permanent also, until God appoints, or unless He has appointed, another symbol. *Purification* was symbolically represented by *circumcision*, but its symbol is now *baptism* : *redemption* and *life* were symbolized by the *passover* ; they are now by the *Lord's Supper*.

SEC. II. RELATION BETWEEN MIRACLES AND PROPHECY.

In the preceding section attention was directed briefly to that peculiarly intimate relation between a miracle and a prophecy which had been expressed by Dr. Wardlaw, in the following antithetic sentence : " Every prophecy is a miracle, and every miracle is a prophecy. The prophecy is a miracle of knowledge ; the miracle is a prophecy of power." It seemed desirable to direct attention to this antithetic statement, while engaged mainly in defining what prophecy is, as it is itself of the nature of a definition ; but the thought deserves more full attention than we could at that point of our disquisition consistently give. We return to it now, that we may devote to it the attention it deserves.

It will be remembered that, in our chapter on miracles, we have maintained the opinion that " all true miracles are wrought by the direct intervention of divine power, by God Himself, and not by any created being." When the Lord Jesus wrought any miracle, although He in some instances raised His voice to His Father, it was not on His own account, but for the sake of those who stood by,—it was not for higher and divine aid, for He was Himself divine ; and although He wrought miracles in attestation that He was " a Teacher come from God," yet He taught also " as one having authority" in Himself, because He was Himself God. The miracles wrought by Christ had this distinction from all other miracles, that He needed not to call on God to work the miracle. In the Old Testament, all the

miracles wrought by God's messengers were wrought in God's name: in the New Testament, all the miracles wrought by the apostles were wrought in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the fact of their being wrought was a proof of *His divine nature*. We maintained also, that the power of working miracles was not possessed by the apostles in such a manner that they could work miracles when they pleased; but that they received intimation from God when it was His pleasure to work a miracle,—that is, there was *inspiration* as the necessary antecedent of every miracle. In every instance God communicated to the apostle His intention to put forth His divine power: the apostle announced this; and the miracle followed. In this point, and specially, rests the intimate and deep relation between miracles and prophecy; but Dr. Wardlaw does not seem to have carried his analysis deep enough to perceive this point. It is of importance, nevertheless, to mark it, because, while it gives us the very essence of the relation, it also enables us to preserve the necessary distinction between them, which he seems to lose. The point and essence of the relation is *inspiration*—the God-given communion with God, which no man can seize for himself, engross for himself, retain for himself, or use for himself,—which God alone gives when He pleases, regulates as He pleases, continues as long as He pleases, withdraws when He pleases, and withholds till He pleases. There cannot be any miracle without inspiration; because, as the miracle is a direct act of divine power, anticipating, suspending, or transcendently surpassing the operations of the known laws of nature—or the *first cause* working instead of and without second causes,—none but God Himself can know when it is His pleasure so to work, till He impart that knowledge, or give that information, which, as revelation, is inspiration. There cannot be prophecy without inspiration; because God alone knows the future, sees the end from the beginning, has fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass, and causes all things to work together for the accomplishment of His pre-determined counsel and will. Let present appearances, in any case, be what they may, God can change them in a moment, and so frustrate at once the most sanguine expectations of men, or change the most gloomy and threatening prospects into the sunshine of prosperity. God alone, therefore, can foretell the future, because God alone determines the future. No man can foretell the future, unless

divine inspiration reveal to him that future, giving him the spirit of prophecy.¹

The spirit of prophecy, however, may be given to any inspired man, at any time when God pleases, without there being any connection between that and the working of miracles. The prophecy may foretell some future event in which there may be nothing intrinsically miraculous,—nothing but the common operation of the known laws of nature; and, in our opinion, it would only tend to introduce a certain amount of confusion of terms to call this a “miracle of knowledge.” It is not even *knowledge*, in the proper sense of that term; for the man does not so much *know* that the event is about to happen, sooner or

¹ It may be expedient to offer a few observations explanatory of one passage in the book of Deuteronomy relative to prophecy, but bearing also some relation to what has been already said with regard to miracles. In the thirteenth chapter of that book there is stated what may be called a hypothetical case, and a direction given how it should be dealt with. “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them,—thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in.” Let it be observed, first, that for anything in the passage itself, the person may be regarded as a false prophet, and the “sign or wonder” only counterfeit, though such as might appear real, and have an apparently real fulfilment. In that case it would not differ essentially from the tricks of the magicians. But if we take the strongest meaning which the words will bear, and suppose the “sign or wonder” to be of a really miraculous character, and that it really “came to pass,” by God’s permission, to “prove” them, mark well the test or criterion which is given: It involves a contradiction of the manifest miracles already wrought for their deliverance, and the rule of love and duty founded upon those miracles and that deliverance, and therefore must be at once rejected, even though it could not be answered, because it cannot be believed that God will contradict Himself, and give His glory to another. You *have* a revelation already, amply proved; cleave to that, and listen not to any one who would teach otherwise, on any pretence. Puzzle not yourselves with the attempt to detect the counterfeit. Trust not to your own moral faculty for the detection. Try it by divine truth already known; and if it agree not with that, reject it instantly,—it is at best a trial of your faith: *prove* that faith by its immediate and indignant rejection.

more remote, as *receive an intimation from God to that effect*, with a command to declare it. And both the intimation and the event may be so absolutely specific, that, having been given, recorded and fulfilled, they remain as proofs of God's government of the world, and are generally known as such, but form no part of any such knowledge as could be available for any other purpose. There was nothing specially miraculous in the Apostle Paul's deliverance from shipwreck, although none but God could have told him both that the ship was to be wrecked, and that not a life was to be lost; and neither he, nor any one else, could have made any use of that specific knowledge in any future voyage from Crete to Malta. And when we find that not only the mariners used their best skill, but that Paul interposed to prevent them from leaving the ship, that their skill might be kept available to the last moment in the use of suitable means, we cannot but see that there is nothing in the whole transaction miraculous, except the prediction, that though the ship was to perish, they would all be saved. This result was not in any proper sense within the region of Paul's knowledge, and was not therefore "a miracle of knowledge;" but it was a specific prophecy, given to him by the Spirit of inspiration, for a specific purpose; and its accomplishment proved, not superior knowledge on his part, but that he enjoyed special communications from God, and, therefore, that he ought to be believed when he declared God's messages to men.

Take another, and a very remarkable instance. When Elisha was in the camp of the confederate armies of Judah, Israel, and Edom, in their expedition against Moab, and these confederates were on the point of perishing with thirst, they requested the interposition of that prophet. At first he was inclined to refuse to hold any intercourse with them, on account of the idolatrous conduct of the king of Israel, but he had respect to Jehoshaphat king of Judah. This respect did not, however, at once avail him. The Spirit of prophecy was not at his own command. His agitated and disturbed soul required to be soothed into a holy calm by a minstrel, who played, most probably, and sang one of the songs of Zion—the psalms of David. As the minstrel raised the holy strain, the prophet felt the Spirit of inspiration entering into his soul, and informing him what God was about to do. Then, and then only, could he say, "Thus saith the Lord." Not till

that moment did he possess any knowledge relative to that very brief futurity. It was not, therefore, so truly a miracle of knowledge, as a miracle of inspiration, conveying directly and specially the Spirit of prophecy. But when, in obedience to the divinely inspired command, the confederate armies made ditches and reservoirs for the water which had been promised, and when a sudden and unexpected torrent of rain, falling on the high mountains of Edom, sent its gushing streams into these prepared ditches, this fulfilment of the prophet's prediction was at once a miracle and a fulfilled prophecy, and was surely fitted to constrain all Israel to know that God spoke by the lips of His inspired servant, Elisha. It might be said, perhaps, that there was nothing directly miraculous in heavy rain falling upon the mountains of Edom, and finding its way down the declivity into the valley, where the armies lay encamped; but even though there were nothing supernatural in that fact itself,—which, however, no man can certainly say,—the fact of its being foretold, and of its occurring at that very juncture, and as foretold, is itself a miracle,—implying that God had laid His almighty hand on nature, and was employing it supernaturally to work His will.

But prophecies may be uttered and miracles wrought by the same man, at the same time, and in connection with some message or command, some promise or threatening, from God. Take, for example, the very remarkable instance of the prophet who came to Bethel, in the time of Jeroboam. That prophet foretold that a child should be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, at some future period,—for the child was yet to be born, which marks considerable futurity, and the event proved to be remote indeed—fifteen generations, 350 years distant,—and that this king of Judah should pollute Jeroboam's altar, by burning men's bones upon it. He foretold also a present sign, that the altar should immediately be rent, and the ashes that were upon it poured out. But the impious and idolatrous king stretched forth his hand in anger, exclaiming, "Lay hold on him." The hand so stretched out was smitten with instant paralysis, and remained in its outstretched position, withered, powerless, dead. At the same moment the altar was rent, and the ashes poured out, by no human hand or power; and the present sign was given, as foretold,—earnest and pledge that the greater prediction would also be fulfilled.

Further, at the humble king's earnest entreaty, the prophet prayed that the dried-up hand might be restored again; and God heard and answered the prayer, and wrought a miracle of healing mercy at the moment, and on the spot. These conjoint miracles should surely have been enough to convince Jeroboam and the people of Israel, that this prophet bore the commission of Jehovah, that his words were true, and that the prediction relating to the future would certainly be fulfilled. But when, after the lapse of fifteen generations, the child of the house of David named Josiah was born, reached maturity, sat on the throne of David, and executed the threatened vengeance on Bethel and its altar, this fulfilment formed the most complete attestation that could even be imagined of the truth of the prophet's divine commission, and of all that he had said and done on the former memorable occasion.

It did more, much more, than all this. The fulfilment of a prophecy, uttered in connection with the working of a miracle, is ample proof of *three* things. 1. It proves the divine origin of the prediction. There was war often, and hostility generally, between the house of David and the kings of the ten tribes; and this hostility became intensified when the king of Judah was a hater of idolatry, which the kings of the ten tribes always supported. It might therefore have been hazarded, perhaps, as a bold conjecture, that some future king of Judah would be strong enough to destroy and pollute the idolatrous altar at Bethel; and this might have been surreptitiously inserted in a pretended prophecy. Our German rationalists, at least, would have no difficulty in framing some such hypothetical explanation. But the present miracle of the rent altar, spontaneously given by the prophet, could not have been fabricated, because it was susceptible of instant public detection; and it proved amply the divine origin of the prediction, and therefore of the prophet's commission. 2. It proved also the divine authority of the message, which he was commissioned to deliver. That message was a strong condemnation of the idolatrous worship which had been instituted by Jeroboam at Bethel. It proved that the idol-god was a nonentity, and could not protect its own worship and worshippers; and at the same moment, and by the same miraculous interposition, it proved that Jehovah, and He alone, is God. The miracle was the direct work of God; and being

wrought by God in attestation of the message, it proved that the message itself was of divine authority. 3. It proved also the reality of the miracle which was thus associated with the prophecy. Suppose that at some period considerably after the prophecy was delivered, and before its fulfilment, the narrative recording it had been read by some one of the ten tribes—an idolater,—and not disposed to admit anything that seemed to ascribe pre-eminence to Judah and Jehovah, such an one might have said, “Oh, that is merely a fabrication got up by the people of Judah; and they have added a pretended miracle, as a supernatural attestation to the story. But no such miracle ever took place; or if it was believed in that dark and remote age, when contentions ran high, and strong things were said and done on both sides, and strange things too readily believed, yet there is not anything like sufficient evidence that it ever really happened; and it would require very good evidence to make it even probable.” In the meantime the promised reforming king has ascended the throne of Judah. Bethel has fallen into his power. He pollutes it by burning on it the bones of dead men, even of the priests who had worshipped there; and all this apparently without any direct knowledge at the time that he was thus fulfilling an ancient prophecy. The prophecy is now fulfilled; but by its fulfilment the reality of the miracle is also proved. Prophecy, miracle, and fulfilment,—all confirm reciprocally each other. The prophecy was uttered by inspiration direct from God; the miracle was wrought by the direct intervention of God, attesting the commission of the prophet, and the divine origin of the prophecy; the fulfilment was brought to pass by the all-ruling power of Divine Providence, and was conclusive proof of the truth of the prophecy, and the reality of the miracle; and by consequence proved the divine origin and authority of even the record.

We have directed attention to this instance of fulfilled prophecy having a miracle associated with it, for this special reason, because a very considerable portion of the prophecies contained in Scripture are also associated with miracles. Many of the Old Testament prophecies relate to ancient nations, and predict their fortunes in times then very far remote; while several of these prophecies are also connected with miracles. In our own age the fulfilment of these ancient predictions has

been most signally pointed out, even to the most minute point; and this is continuing to be done more and more almost every day. Now, all this tends both to prove the authenticity and authority of the Bible, in which these prophecies are contained, and the reality of the miracles wrought at the same time, and recorded in the same book. Miracles are thus being restored to their proper place and authority, in spite of all the cavils of all sceptics and rationalists, and are recovering one of their characteristics which seemed almost lost,—that, namely, of bearing testimony to the divine commission of those who bore and delivered the messages of God contained in that sacred narrative. The fulfilment of the prophecies ought to render the awful sanction of the miracles scarcely less solemnly impressive to us than to those who beheld them wrought, and felt the near presence, as they witnessed the mighty power, of God.

In the New Testament there may be thought to be fewer direct prophecies than in the Old; but there are many more miracles. Take the two together, and then mark the result. Take, for example, *first*, the prophecies relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, the dissolution of the Jewish polity, the utter dispersion of the Jews, and the subsequent fate of the entire race, as given by the Lord Jesus Christ. All these predictions have been fulfilled, are in a state of fulfilment, and are being more and more fulfilled every day before our eyes, and beyond all possibility of dispute. But all this succession and continuation of fulfilment of Christ's great and solemn prophecy is a daily and hourly confirmation of all the miracles which He wrought, and this daily and perpetual confirmation of Christ's miracles amounts to a daily and perpetual proof of all that the Gospels and Epistles have taught concerning Him, even of His true divine nature and Godhead. This is truly solemn and awful. If our minds are fully instructed with regard to the true nature of prophecies and miracles, and our spiritual eyes truly opened and enlightened, we ought to feel as if we were daily and hourly beholding the very miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ. And when in the writings of the inspired apostles we read the symbolical prophecies of a great and terrible antichristian apostasy, with mysterious notes of time long continued pervading that symbolical prophecy, though we may not be able fully to understand the symbolical meaning, yet we cannot fail to trace many of its terrific lineaments,

and thereby to know that this apostasy has long existed, and still exists; that its dark power for evil is not yet at an end; and that, probably, some fearful events may yet take place before its final doom and destruction. But all this, terrible as it is in its direct character and aspect, is yet a confirmation of the divine origin of the Scriptures of the New Testament, and of all the blessed truths which they teach. If, again, our minds are fully instructed in the nature and reciprocal support and mutual confirmation of prophecies, miracles, and the sacred record that contains and relates them, we ought to feel as if we were listening daily and hourly to the teaching of the inspired apostles, Paul and John, or rather to the Holy Spirit speaking to us by them. Thus both *Judaism* and *Popery*, in their present condition, however pernicious in themselves and to those who adhere to the abolished system of the one, or believe the deadly blasphemies, delusions, and corruptions of the other, are permanent, open, and incontestable proofs of the truth and divine origin and authority of the gospel.

The essential principle of the relation between prophecies and miracles resides, *first*, then, in their being both and each the special work of God Himself, and not of any created being; and *next*, in their implying, each and both, *inspiration* in the divinely commissioned messenger, who announces the miracle, or speaks the prophecy. But they are distinct in themselves, and therefore all the more suited to corroborate each other, and to form a conjoint and infallible testimony. If they were in their own nature identical, they could not give to each other mutual support; and while it may be correct enough to call a miracle "a prophecy of power," it is not correct to call a prophecy "a miracle of knowledge," though it might be loosely termed a miracle of foreknowledge or prescience. When their testimony is ultimately combined, as in the case of a miracle wrought at the moment of uttering a prophecy relating to some event considerably future, the fulfilment of the prophecy ought to be felt as equivalent to the reproduction of the past, so that, when we mark the confirmed or fulfilled prophecy, we ought to realize the miracle, and so realize and receive the full testimony of God in support of His divine message, as if we, at the moment, both heard Him speak and saw Him work, and thereby knew the message to be indeed divine.

SEC. III. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPHECY.

It may conduce to our receiving a more complete conception of Scripture prophecy than would be otherwise possible, if we glance at some of its leading characteristics.

1. The *first* of these to which we would direct attention, is the united *extent and harmony of Scripture prophecy*. The whole of the Bible bears the prophetic character, and may be said to extend from the time of Adam till that of Malachi—a period of about 3600 years; or if we take it from Moses till Malachi, which is the most limited view that can be taken, it still includes a period of more than 1000 years, during which prophecy was almost continuous, and was regularly recorded, and its continuous record formed into what we now term the Old Testament Scriptures. There are no other records in the world of equal extent and continuity; and these records are both historical and prophetical, yet they harmonize throughout, although produced by persons of great diversity in rank, education, and condition,—from the sovereign on the throne down to the humble herdsman or vine-dresser. There could have been no collusive agreement among them as men, living in so many different ages, and in such diversities of circumstance; yet there is a perfect agreement and harmony of spirit and doctrine pervading their collected writings, proving that the *one Divine Spirit* gave them utterance.

2. We mark *next* their *circumstantiality*. In all pretended prophecies this is carefully avoided, and the pseudo-prophet or oracle gives out the prediction or utters the response in a manner so vague as to admit of almost any interpretation, and is even studiously ambiguous. Take, for example, the oracular response given to Cræsus: “*Κροισος Ἄλυν διαβας, μεγαλην ἀρχην καταλυσει.*” Or that given to Pyrrhus king of Epirus: “*Aio, te, Æacide, Romanos vincere posse. Ibis redibis nunquam in bello peribis.*” In each of these pretended predictions there was such absolute ambiguity, that either the one or the other of two completely opposite meanings might take place, and yet be equally contained within the meaning of the studiously deceptive words. Even if we should suppose that these words were not merely the cunningly devised expression of a subtle priest, but were the supernatural utterance of a demon, by

means of one possessed by a spirit of divination, as many think, this hypothesis would lead only to this inference, that the demon himself knew quite as little about futurity as did those by whom he was consulted ; but he gave the ambiguous response, in order to preserve at once his influence and his credit. To have ventured into the region of minute detail, would have been to expose his false prophecy to certain detection ; therefore only some vague, general, and ambiguous answer is given. Exactly the reverse is the character of Scripture prophecy. It is circumstantial, minute, detailed, and unambiguous, and abounds with special references to times, places, and persons, particularly when cast into the narrative form.

3. A *third* characteristic is its *uniformity of fulfilment*. There have been in all ages and countries almost innumerable traditionary predictions,—sometimes the utterance of deep and far-forecasting sagacity, giving condensed expression to its thought in a sententious manner,—sometimes the stern denunciations of hate and vengeance,—sometimes the blind yet impulsive language of strong prejudice and dark superstition,—and sometimes the suggested hint of a cautious plotter, who threw out the mysterious thought, to prepare men's minds for the premeditated deed. One peculiarity attaches to all these pseudo-prophetic and popular predictions, that not more, perhaps, than one in a hundred or a thousand of them, ever even seem to be fulfilled ; but that if one among many meet with some coincident apparent fulfilment, it is at once admitted, and all the failures are forgotten, and these traditionary prophecies still believed, on the strength of the one occasional coincidence. In Scripture prophecy, on the other hand, the fulfilments are not occasional, but invariable, constant, continuous, and exact. What has been foretold always takes place, and always exactly as foretold ; and in this respect also they are directly contrasted with all other predictions.

4. A *fourth* characteristic of Scripture prophecy deserves to be mentioned. *In every instance the special points mentioned were such as could not have been foreseen by human sagacity.* Men of comprehensive knowledge and profound penetration into the nature and power of great principles, may be able frequently to anticipate what these principles will produce in their influence on the mind of the public, and in its consequent actions ; and when they give expression to the conclusions they

have drawn in words of oracular brevity, and the anticipated result follows, they may seem to utter predictions. But Scripture prophecies are of a totally different character. They relate to events which no human foresight could possibly have anticipated, frequently to events produced by the miraculous interposition of God, or to events requiring such a special combination of concurrent circumstances, as no man could have foreseen. The truth is, that God, who gave these prophecies by inspiration, well knew the perversity of man, and his tendency to indulge in sophistical cavils, and therefore gave no prophecy in such a manner as to leave it fairly exposed to such cavils. Men may and will cavil still, as they have always done; for what is there that the depraved mind of man will not pervert or misrepresent? But such is the character of scriptural prophecy, that it will always maintain its heavenly truthfulness; and that it will always be possible for a truly Christian-minded and intelligent man to vindicate it triumphantly.

There are several other characteristics of Scripture prophecy to which I will only allude, though they might deserve fuller treatment: such as, That all the predictions can be proved to have been delivered and recorded before the events; that these predicted events always correspond precisely to the predictions; that where there is obscurity, as when symbols are used, this is done designedly, to prevent the possibility of men combining either to produce or to prevent them, and to preserve free agency in man.

SEC. IV. CONFIRMATION OF THE EVIDENCE OF PROPHECY.

It has been stated, *that it could be proved that all the predictions were uttered and recorded before the predicted events took place.* This might seem almost a truism to a person unacquainted with the cavils of the enemies of Christianity. But it should be known, that in several instances, when the opponent could not dispute the circumstantiality of the prediction, and the equal circumstantial correspondence of the fulfilment, he has had recourse to the subterfuge of asserting that the prediction was not a prediction at all, but was a fabrication in the name of a prophecy, and was really written after the event had taken place. Such was the argument, or, rather, baseless assertion, of Porphyry with regard to the book of Daniel.

When he perused that remarkable book, he could not but perceive that it contained symbolical predictions representing vividly the fortunes of the great successive monarchies of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome; and that in one of its symbolical visions, the contests between two of the subdivisions into which the Grecian monarchy was split, namely, Syria and Egypt, were specified with almost the minute exactness of a historical abstract. He had no other means of evading the force of these prophecies but that of audaciously asserting that the whole was a comparatively recent fabrication, written long after the events had taken place, under the assumed name of Daniel. Such an assertion was of course easily made in that age,—just as similar assertions are easily made in our own times. But, fortunately, they are not difficult to answer, and have frequently been answered, though each reviver of them takes no notice of the answers.

It may be expedient to state a few points which would furnish an ample answer, not only to such an objection against the book of Daniel, but to similar objections urged against any one of the prophetic books, from Moses to Malachi. The point to be proved is, the genuine antiquity of these books; for if that be proved, then it follows inevitably that they were all written before the fulfilment of the predictions they contain, and that therefore they are all truly prophetical. First, then, let it be observed, that the universally concurrent testimony of the entire Jewish church and people proves the remote antiquity, not only of Daniel's prophecy, but of all the books of all the prophets. Not one of the books of the prophets contained anything specially flattering to the Jews, such as the boastful legends of other nations do, and are preserved to gratify their pride; but, on the contrary, the writings of the prophets abound with strong and even vehement censure on the conduct of the entire nation,—king, priests, and people alike. Yet the whole nation concurred in preserving them, and in bearing unbroken testimony to their authenticity, genuineness, and truth. And there is not one particle of counter-authority that can be produced against them. Again, we know that from the times of the captivity, in consequence of the seventy years spent by the majority of the people at Babylon and in its provinces, they so far lost their own language as to be unable from that time forward to write or speak correctly the Hebrew tongue.

But the language of all the Hebrew prophets is so purely Hebrew as to carry us back irresistibly to a period before the captivity, or immediately at the captivity; and the very mixture of Chaldaic words that is found in the writings of the later prophets, is itself an indication of the change that had taken place. These later prophets wrote Hebrew still, in the main, because it was their sacred language; but they no longer wrote it purely,—they wrote little,—and they soon ceased to write at all.

Further, the existence of the Samaritan Pentateuch proves this, at least, that the books of Moses are older than the revolt of the ten tribes. Ancient copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch are still in existence, and are preserved by the remaining Samaritans with the most jealous care. Now the books of Moses have met, in modern times and on the Continent, with treatment similar to the book of Daniel; and yet we have the concurrent testimony of both Jews and Samaritans, implacable foes to each other, that these books are of vast antiquity, far beyond what the assertions of modern infidels and rationalists would allow. An ample proof of the certainty that the book of Daniel was written before the existence of many, or most, of the events which it predicts, is to be found in the Septuagint. Alexander the Great encouraged the settlement of a Jewish colony in Alexandria. His successors followed his example; and there soon sprung up a numerous and wealthy colony of Jews in that city, whose descendants became unable to write or speak any language but Greek. A translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek was therefore necessary, and was produced nearly 300 years before the Christian era. The utmost care was taken by the translators to incorporate nothing but what had been always held sacred; and no writing was admitted that had been produced subsequent to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Now the book of Daniel is in that translation, occupying the same position in which we find it in our Bibles. It follows, that the book of Daniel is of more ancient date than the Septuagint, else it could not have been then translated and incorporated; and yet it contains predictions that were not fulfilled till after that date. Nay, it follows, that it was older than the period of Ezra and Nehemiah, or it could not have been included by them, and therefore would not have been translated; but the Persian empire was in all its

glory in Ezra's day, and therefore the book of Daniel contained the predictions relative to the overthrow of Persia, long before that event took place. The assertions of Porphyry, then, and of his modern followers, are directly contradicted by numerous and well-ascertained facts; and in this manner it is easy to maintain the great antiquity of the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament, while the proof of their antiquity is itself sufficient proof that they contain true prophecies, uttered long previous to the predicted events.

There is another characteristic of Scripture prophecy, to which also we think it right to advert. *When prophecy is given in the symbolical form, it is necessarily obscure*, and cannot be interpreted with any certainty till the symbols have been adequately explained, either by an explanation divinely given, as is sometimes done, or by its having been explained by the fulfilment. Several proofs of divine wisdom may be perceived in this peculiarity. If the prophecy were expressed in direct, plain, narrative language, the very utterance of the prophecy might lead to its fulfilment, by inducing men to combine for that purpose. But any such preconcerted combination would seem very seriously to detract from its divine authority, and would expose it to the grave suspicion of being the first step of a preconcerted human plot. The designed obscurity of symbolical prophecy frees it from any such suspicion or accusation. There might, on the other hand, be combinations formed for the express purpose of defeating the prediction; and such combination might affect peculiarly the conduct of men on both sides, and impair one of the peculiar glories of the divine administration,—which is, that God works out His predeterminate and sovereign will by means of free agents, without impairing the freedom of their agency. Let us trace this thought a little further.

An attentive perusal of Scripture prophecy will enable the thoughtful reader to perceive, that the plain narrative style is used generally in cases when the fulfilment of the prophecy will be accomplished by means chiefly of agents who are unacquainted with it. It was foretold to Abraham that his race should sojourn in a foreign land, and be afflicted there, but that God would judge the oppressors, and deliver the promised seed, and bring them into the promised land. This prophecy was of course unknown to the Egyptians,—even specially un-

known when a new dynasty arose that knew not Joseph,—and consequently it had no influence upon the oppressors, leaving them entirely to the freedom of their own will, and the exercise of their own evil passions. But it would remain known to the Israelites, and especially to those of them who retained the faith and cherished the hopes of their fathers. In the case of the Egyptians, the unknown predictions could have no tendency to modify their conduct; and they were the human agents in the matter: in the case of the Israelites, who had not to act, but only to suffer and wait, the known prediction tended to sustain them in patient endurance, and to encourage their perseverance in faith. The prophecies relating to the Christian dispensation are almost all expressed in symbolical language, and cannot, therefore, be so clearly understood as if they had been given in the terms of direct narrative. Let it be noted, however, how peculiarly this suits the present condition of the Christian dispensation. A plain narrative might, in ancient times, be known to one nation, and yet remain unknown to all others, so limited and uncertain was the circulation of human knowledge. But now, such is the power of the press in diffusing knowledge, that whatsoever is known to any one civilised nation cannot long remain unknown to every other. But the symbolical language is dark enough to conceal the prophecy alike from all till the symbols have been interpreted by the actual fulfilment, so that the prediction cannot to any appreciable extent interfere with man's free agency,—yet so dimly intelligible, or so intelligible notwithstanding its mysteriousness, that it is still “a light shining in a dark place,” serving to keep faith alive and vigilant, to brighten hope, and to encourage exertion.

This, we think, serves to explain both how it is, and why it is, that the book of Revelation has never yet been so interpreted, that its interpretation has obtained or commanded universal assent. It is not, we are fully persuaded, possible that it will be so, till after its fulfilment, because it was not intended that it should be so; because, if it were, it would of necessity infringe man's free agency; and because it would not be rightly adapted to a state of probation, such as that in which we are placed. In the meantime, there is so much of the almost evident in it,—so much of what we can almost understand,—so much of what strong faith may almost descry, when

with spiritually enlightened eye it gazes on the mighty symbolic visions,—that very many will always be irresistibly attracted to the study of this mysterious book, and the faith of the church will be kept alive, and its hopes encouraged, throughout the long night of tribulation, till the dawning of that brighter morning in which the day shall break and the shadows flee away. The true position, both of the Apocalypse and of all symbolical prophecy, seems to us to be, that it bears to man in modern times, and surrounded with the light of extended civilisation, a similar relation to that which was borne in ancient times, to men among whom the means of intercommunication and enlightenment were very small, by *narrative prophecy*. Such prophecy did not then interfere with the free agency of man, because it was either not known to, or not believed by, those who were to be the active parties in accomplishing it; and although known to those who had to wait and endure, it could not otherwise affect their conduct than by strengthening their faith and patience. This is precisely what symbolical prophecy is still fitted to effect, not by its being interpreted, but by its remaining uninterpreted, yet believed; and by its thereby leaving man's free agency undisturbed, and yet keeping faith steadfast and vigilant, hope still cheerful, and duty in a state of incessant and energetic Christian enterprise. If men were able clearly to interpret the symbols, and count and arrange the chronological dates in the Apocalypse, so as to mention the very years in which certain grand events are to occur, it is difficult to conceive how they could do otherwise than regulate their conduct, not by the sense of present duty, but by the predicted result. It is to us utterly inconceivable how the course of future events could be rendered as plain as if recorded in a kind of anticipatory gazette of facts and dates, and yet man's free agency and moral responsibility preserved. Symbolical prophecy, incapable of clear interpretation till after its fulfilment, seems to meet all the requirements of the case,—preserving man's free agency and responsibility, and yet furnishing and continually increasing manifestation of God's moral government. Men may, and no doubt will, continue to seek the key of the interpretation of the Apocalypse; and if they do so cautiously and reverentially, they may acquire much increase of spiritual instruction and encouragement to faith and hope; yet it were well for them to know that it has no key but

Divine Providence, and that Providence will not open it before the appointed hour,—“for it is not for men to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath kept in His own power.” Let us watch and pray that we enter not into temptation.

Hitherto our attention has been directed chiefly to the general character and aspect of Scripture prophecy, both in its relation to, and connection with, miracles, and in its internal nature and structure, as *narrative, typical, and symbolical*. We should, perhaps, now proceed to furnish some proofs and illustrations of the confirmation which it has received by its manifest and manifold fulfilment in all ages and countries. This has long been a fertile topic; and its fertility is increasing almost every year, in proportion as travels and discoveries increase our knowledge of what has taken place already, or is still taking place, in those regions of the world to which Scripture prophecy chiefly relates. We may add, that it is also both a very pleasing and a very easy topic, and one which may not only help to illustrate many a passage of Scripture, but may also form a course of interesting and profitable reading to men in those portions of time, when the weary mind is unfit for severer work. This interesting and instructive topic, the fulfilment of prophecy, has already an extensive literature of its own, extending over centuries, and embracing a great variety of works, from the time of the recondite productions of the Benedictine fathers, and Sir Walter Raleigh’s noble history of the world, down to the light, sketchy tours and travels in Syria, Egypt, and Palestine, which are pouring from the teeming press almost every year, month, week, and day in all countries.

As these works are both very numerous and very easy of access, in almost all forms and sizes, elaborate treatises, or abridgments, I shall not expend much time in attempting to give either an outline or extract, but rather attempt to give such principles as may help to guide in a course of reading. In doing so, the first point to which I would direct attention is what I would call the classification of Scripture prophecy in its historical aspect.

1. The *first* class includes *all those prophecies that relate specially to the Hebrew nation*. That class of prophecies begins properly with the promises given to Abraham, relative to the political and national destinies of his race, and to their inheritance of spiritual blessings. In studying these, it will be

necessary to mark carefully the relation in which the *national* privileges stand to the *religious* privileges. This may not be so apparently necessary, in the first view of it, as it will be seen to be afterwards, when more fully understood. Let me suggest an instance. If one should happen to be engaged in controversy with a Baptist, and should refer to the Abrahamic covenant, the opponent would probably assert that circumcision was entirely a *national institution*, marking national relation, and deserving national privileges, but had *no religious relation*, and therefore formed no parallel to, and had no connection with, baptism. One could not meet this argument, unless he were able to discriminate between the *national* and the *religious* privileges of the Jews, and to show the exact relation which circumcision had to *both*, and to *each in its own specialty*. Again, if one were engaged in defending the right relation between the *state* and the *church* against some other who asserted that they ought not to have any relation at all, and the course of argument should lead to a reference to the divinely constituted relation between the Hebrew church and state, this would probably be met by the assertion, that the Hebrew church and nation formed a special case, a *theocracy*, and therefore could not be properly regarded as furnishing any precedent, or even analogy. Unless a just, accurate, and enlarged idea of what the theocracy really was and implied had been acquired, it would not be found possible to maintain possession of that really essential and very powerful, even conclusive, argument. Permit me to direct attention to this very specially, for two strong reasons,—*first*, because, without a clear and enlarged conception of the theocracy, we will not be able rightly to understand the prophecies specially relating to the Jews; and *next*, because, without that, we will not be able rightly to understand the position taken by the *Scottish Reformers*, the *Covenanters*, and the *Free Church*, to appreciate its spiritual importance, and to defend and maintain it with that clear intelligence and unshrinking faith which our position and duties may render it necessary to possess and display.

These are but specimens of the importance of this class of prophecy.

2. The *second* class includes the *prophecies relating to other nations*. This class we will find to be very extensive, and very varied and interesting. It might lead us to the study of all

that is yet known with regard to Egypt, both ancient and modern; and that is an almost boundless region. Or it might involve us in a course of research into all that can be made out with regard to the race of Ishmael—the Arab race, with all their strange vicissitudes,—for ever warring, yet for ever unconquered, as they dwell, in their wild freedom, in the face of all their brethren. Or of the chequered fortunes of Edom, at one time so proud, so wealthy, so secure, dwelling in the clefts of the rocks, and now so desolate, that very rarely, and only recently, has any traveller ventured to explore its melancholy ruins. Or you might be led to trace the fortunes of the western shores of Palestine, from the times of the Phœnicians and of Cadmus, when that people began the marvellous enterprises of commerce and of literature, throughout all their friendly or hostile intercourse with the Jews, till recent times, when the capture of Acre by a British force changed the fate of Turkey. Farther east our researches might extend, till we had traversed the snowy peaks or fertile vales of Lebanon, the rich and beautiful plains of Damascus and Syria, the solitary grandeur of Tadmor in the wilderness, the vast valley of Mesopotamia and Chaldea, the pillared gardens of Shushan the palace, and the cities of the Medes and Persians. In all these countries we might read on every side the records of fulfilled prophecy, so minutely and signally manifest, that no traveller, no historian, can fail to notice and to relate them,—not even the infidels Volney and Gibbon, whose statements are often almost a commentary on fulfilled Scripture prophecy. Here I can but point to the *summa fastigia rerum*.

3. The *third* class includes all the *prophecies relating to the Messiah*. Admitting fully that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” I wish, nevertheless, to direct attention very specially to those that ought to be regarded as *distinctively Messianic*—from the first prophetic promise of “the seed of the woman,” given in Eden, throughout the entire course of Scripture, growing more and more distinct as it advances, to Noah, to Shem, to Abraham, to Moses, to David and his house, through the Psalms, through Isaiah and the other prophets, till almost every peculiarity that characterized the person, the life, and the death of Jesus had been foretold. We will find this an extremely important and precious class of prophecy; and its careful study will enable us not only to understand the

whole spirit of Scripture better, clearer, and more comprehensively than would otherwise be possible, but it will also supply us with ready and conclusive answers to the sophistical objections of neologians and rationalists. For example, when they argue that the history of Christ is not a real history, but only a mythical embodiment of certain doctrines in a historical aspect by the apostles and their followers, who adopted that mode of teaching as Jesus Himself had done in His parables, the ready and conclusive answer is a direct reference to those ancient Hebrew prophecies in which the very facts are foretold *as facts*, which they wish to misrepresent as *myths*. I but suggest this topic here; I may return to it again.

4. The *fourth* class of Scripture prophecy includes all those predicted by Christ Himself and by the apostles—chiefly those which relate to the destruction of Jerusalem and abolition of the whole Hebrew economy, to the corruptions which should enter into the church, and to the nature, the rise, the long ascendancy, and the destruction of Antichrist. To specify these subjects fully would require a long and minute dissertation. But it may be right to direct attention to the subject, though it be but briefly. The great prophecy regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, and the abolition of the Mosaic dispensation, bears manifestly a double reference, both as it referred to the overthrow of the Jewish nation, polity and economy, that it might give place to the Christian dispensation; and as it contained a prediction of a vastly greater sweep of prophetic intimation relating to the final consummation of all things. This, again, might fairly introduce a disquisition on the subject of what has been called the *double meaning of prophecy*. This is not peculiar to the prophecy relating to the destruction of Jerusalem and then that of the world, which this prophecy is thought to contain, but may be traced in many others. The common idea entertained regarding what has been called the *double meaning* or *double sense* of prophecy is this: That in many instances Scripture prophecy has evidently two successive meanings or applications, the first of which does not exhaust the prediction, but leaves it still in force, relating to a still more remote futurity, in which it will at last meet a complete and final fulfilment. This is frequently illustrated by what is experienced in travelling up a hill: for a time we see but one summit rising huge and high above us, but when we have reached its height we find another still to scale,

and perhaps another, and another, before we attain the loftiest peak of all; yet from a little distance the nearer, though the lower, concealed the more distant but higher. So it may be, say they, in the interpretation of prophecy. The event that lies nearest in time to the prophecy may at first seem all that it predicted; but the transaction of that event may soon be perceived not to have in any degree realized all that was foretold, and that therefore there must still remain some mighty catastrophe to give it adequate fulfilment. The destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow and eversion of the entire Hebrew polity was unquestionably a great event, and one of vast consequence in its making way for the free diffusion of the gospel; but the language of our Lord, in answer to one portion of the inquiries of the disciples—"What shall be the sign of *Thy coming*, and of the *end of the world?*"—is expressed in language of such comprehensive grandeur and dignity, that it cannot be applied to any event of such comparative smallness as the overthrow of the Hebrew polity, but must relate to the consummation of all things. Now I cannot say that I quite agree with any of the methods in which this topic is usually treated. There is a measure and modicum of truth and soundness in them all, probably, but they do not seem to me to reach the essence of the subject, and seize on what I would call its axiomatic principles. It is very obvious, that so far as any *typical event* is made the subject of prophecy, that event of which it is a *type* must also have been foretold by consequence. And so far as this is what men mean by the *double meaning of prophecy*, it can occasion no obscurity, when the *type* is understood. But if in any other sense there be a double meaning in prophecy, there must be obscurity and uncertainty, and there may be confusion and error, or, at least, dangerous mistakes and misapplications. This subject, however, is of sufficient importance to require separate and somewhat extended treatment in a definite position of its own; and for that we reserve it.

SEC. V. SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE FROM PROPHECY.

Before quitting the region of evidence from prophecy, there is one important point to which I wish to direct attention for a little.

Attention has already been directed to certain distinct forms of prophetic language,—*narrative*, *poetical*, and *typical* or *symbolical*. The *narrative* is a declaration in plain and direct terms that some event will take place. Of this there are many instances—such as the promises to Abraham, Isaiah's prediction of recovery to Hezekiah, Jeremiah to Zedekiah, and several more. The *poetical* form may also be called the *figurative*; and it adopts and employs the principle of highly animated and idealized poetry, and makes great use of what is called personification. In it everything is *alive*, *sentient*, intelligent. All nature is animated by the poet's own intense life. Hills rejoice—valleys laugh—trees clap their hands—mountains skip—hell is stirred up. This kind of prophetic language is perfectly direct in one sense; only it requires to be reduced to the plain terms of prose, when interpreted.

But the *symbolical* form, with which we may at present conjoin the *typical*, is the representation of the future event in an enigmatical manner. Joseph's dreams were symbolical; so were those of Pharaoh's butler and baker, and of Pharaoh himself. Daniel's vision of the four beasts was a symbolical prophecy. Nebuchadnezzar's dream was symbolical. There was a deep symbolical meaning in the attempted sacrifice of Isaac. Jeremiah's girdle was a symbol; so were his yokes. The book of Revelation is a symbolical prophecy throughout. In all these instances there is as if something were seen and transacted in vision—*prophetic vision*—*as if visible*.

Symbolical prophecy can have *two* aspects. The symbols may have a *historical relation* to the future events which they represent; or they may have an *ideal relation* to it. The *historical relation* of a symbol to an event arises out of the existence of some great principle which characterizes the whole history of man. This is the kind of symbolical language which speaks of signs in heaven and on earth,—of sun, moon, and stars darkened and falling,—of earthquakes,—and of the sea and its commotions; because all these have a historical relation to the cosmical system and all its changes and destinies, to the creation, the fall, the flood, and the final conflagration. In a subordinate sense, this includes all symbolical language taken from external objects and laws of nature. The *ideal relation* of a symbol to one event arises out of some recondite identity in the character of each, which makes the one a suitable repre-

sensation of the other. Thus the *wild beasts* of Daniel's vision fitly represent the *great empires* of the world, as cruel, destructive, and godless powers. Nearly all the symbols of the book of Revelation are of this kind. It will easily be seen that such language as that of Matt. xxiv., and of Joel as quoted in Acts, if symbolical at all, is of what may be called the *historico-symbolical*, arising out of their relation to the cosmical system. This, even at first sight, seems a much more intelligible idea than that which attempts to explain such language by the arbitrary theory, that by the "*heavens*" is meant the government; by "*sun, moon, and stars*," the ruling powers; by "*earth*," the body politic; and by "*seas*," the people. I would not, indeed, strenuously exclude that mode of interpretation, for it both has plausibility in itself, and some support in Scripture; but neither would I adopt it, as a general principle of prophetic interpretation. It seems, indeed, to be fully more allied to the *poetical* or *figurative* form of prophecy than to the *symbolical*. But let us now institute the special explanatory inquiry, for the sake of introducing which these preliminary statements have been made.

There can be no reasonable doubt, that in the very pointed, sublime, and awful prediction, contained in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, uttered by our Lord after He had left the temple, which He never again entered, He foretold two great events,—*the destruction of Jerusalem, and the final judgment*. But what strikes and surprises every attentive reader is, that these events seem to be so closely conjoined in this passage, that they cannot be viewed apart. Some, therefore, regard the whole chapter as having reference to the destruction of Jerusalem alone; and others attempt to point out where the reference to the destruction of Jerusalem ends, and that to the final judgment begins, but find it difficult, if not impossible, to draw the line. Connected with this is the difficulty arising from the very pointed exhortation of Christ to watchfulness, and His declaration: "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled." The difficulty thus suggested is, that the imagery employed is far too magnificently grand and awful to have an adequate fulfilment in anything short of the final judgment, while yet that generation was exhorted to watchfulness, as if it might take place during their own lifetime; nay, were

positively told that such would, in some sense, be the case. The connection of the whole with what was said about the "coming (*παρουσία*) of Christ," seems to add to the difficulty of the passage, and has led to the adoption of some strange interpretations of it, especially by those who hold the theory of the pre-millennial advent.

It might be regarded as very presumptuous for me to say, that the view which I am about to give affords a full and sufficient solution of the difficulties which have been stated; but as it is the result of prolonged study of the Scriptures, and no small amount of reading, supplication for guidance, and meditative thought,—and as it seems to me to come fairly enough within the scope of my province,—I venture to produce it, in the hope that it may tend to remove some obscurity, and perhaps also to settle and confirm the faith of some uncertain inquirers.

I have already referred to the magnificently sublime and awful language employed in a part of that great prophecy, which seems to be too grand and terrible to have an adequate fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem, although that was certainly a very dreadful event. Let me quote the very words: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming (*ἐρχόμενον*) in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." But every reader of the Bible, even of the Old Testament portion of it, ought to be well aware that this language is almost identical with the language used by prophets when predicting events, by no means of greater magnitude and importance than the destruction of Jerusalem; and that, too, when these predictions related to the destruction of heathen countries. Some leading examples may be given:—

Isaiah xiii. 9, 10, relating to Babylon; xxxiv. 4, 5, relating to Idumea.

Jeremiah iv. 23–26, relating to Babylon; yet very solemn.

Ezekiel xxxii. 7, relating to Egypt.

Hosea x. 8, Shalmaneser's invasion (cited Luke xxiii. 30).

Joel ii. 28-31, relating to Israel (cited Acts ii. 16-21); also Joel iii.

Matthew xxiv. 29-31; Luke xxi. 25; relating to Jerusalem.

Revelation vi. 12-17, relating probably to pagan Rome.

Many other similar passages might be selected; but these are quite enough, as instances of the use of such language by the prophets.

The first point of inquiry with regard to the proper interpretation of all these passages, is this: Is there one leading idea which not only pervades them all, but on which they all rest, or from which they all flow? It must be obvious that they all employ language descriptive of what may be termed *a cosmical system*, that is, *man, earth, and heavens*,—and of the darkening, shaking, removal, dissolution, destruction of this system, its earth, and its heaven and heavenly bodies, and man. Not only is this world a system itself, comprising our earth and its inhabitants, and the heavens above us with all their glorious and useful luminaries, but every nation is a system, having its own earth and heavens with reference to its own special inhabitants, so that the destruction of that nation would be the destruction of a system—an earth and heavens blotted out or dissolved. Nay, man himself is, in one sense, a system,—a microcosm, a little world, with an earth and heavens; and his death is, with reference to him, the destruction of a system—an earth and heavens. Most terribly true is this, when the natural death of a man is also his spiritual death;—when for him there is no more an earth in which to repent and serve God, and no more a heaven in which to glorify and enjoy God,—but a hell, the second death, in which to endure for ever a full eternity of woe. The sudden blotting out of a thousand material and unconscious suns, and ten thousand equally insentient planetary worlds, would be as nothing in comparison with the final and endless perdition of a conscious, rational, moral, responsible, immortal human spirit; and might well be described in language of awful solemnity, every word of which seemed even to labour beneath its unutterable weight of deep deploring grief.

Even this comprehensive idea introduces us to one still more comprehensive. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” “And God saw everything that He had made; and behold it was very good.” But sin entered into

the world, and with it death. The sentence was pronounced, but its execution was delayed ; because God, in His love, mercy, and wisdom, determined to save an election of grace, by redeeming them from sin, misery, and death, through the incarnation and death of His own beloved Son. Redemption is thus and therefore a new creation in every possible sense. There is, then, a death-struck and perishing cosmos—mortal and dying man, the inhabitant of a smitten and doomed world,—destined to pass away, and give place to new heavens and a new earth, in which redeemed man shall dwell in righteousness and peace.

The idea of a church was thus introduced ; for the idea of a *church* presupposes a *fall*, and implies a *selection*, or an *election to salvation*. The sentence of destruction pronounced on the cosmical system—on man and his earth and heavens—was delayed for the sake of the church. From that hour the history of the church is the history of the world. This applies to man collectively, even to the whole race of Adam throughout all ages,—to man as a social being, whether in a national capacity, or in a church capacity,—to man likewise as an individual. What is true of the whole race, is true of each individual ; and what is true of each individual, is true also of the whole race. There is at once absolute comprehensiveness, and perfect distinctness.

This, as it seems to me, is the great principle from which all true prophecy flows, and by which it is all pervaded. The testimony of Jesus is indeed the spirit of prophecy. Man the sinner, the earth which he has stained with his crimes, and the heavens which he has darkened with his guilt,—the whole cosmical system of which he is the living and intelligent representative,—must perish. But in its progress towards its final doom, it has to experience not only many signal anticipatory manifestations of that doom, but, in a very important and real sense, even the present existence and operation of that doom. In the destruction of a nation, that doom is, to that extent, realized—man, earth, and heavens ; in the destruction of a church, that present reality is still more awfully apparent ; and in the death of an individual, the same all-embracing truth is also realized, for to him the cosmical system is ended, and eternity begun. What are dead Idumea, or dead Babylon, or dead Egypt, or a dead human being, but so many manifesta-

tions of what will yet be realized, when this earth and these heavens will be a dead world? Well and truthfully, therefore, and in no fiction—in no mere type—not in impressive hortatory language only,—may it be said: “Watch, for ye know not what day, or what hour, your Lord cometh!” for, in a very solemn and comprehensive sense, the day of any man’s death is to him the judgment day.

It seems to follow, therefore, even necessarily, that every prophecy which foretells the destruction of a *system*, of a *nation*, of a *church*, or even of an *individual*, may, with perfect propriety, be expressed in language equally applicable to the final judgment; for the idea is the same, the cause is the same, the result is the same. This does not involve at all the doubtful theory that prophecy has a double meaning, one near and minute, and one remote and extensive. It contains the full, vast, awful conception of a *fallen and lost race*, and a *doomed and destroyed heavens and earth*, and of a *redeemed race*, and a *new heavens and earth*, without either confounding or explaining away these cognate conceptions. It contains also a deep and true principle, by the aid of which the meaning of the expression, “the coming of the Lord,” may be explained and understood. And while it thus furnishes the key by means of which all prophetic language of the figurative and symbolic character may be interpreted, it at the same time leaves to the context of each the determination of its special application.

It may be expedient to illustrate and apply this idea a little further. The *destruction of a church system* can take place only by the *intervention or coming in judgment* of Him who is its Head and King. Others may fight against it; He only can destroy it. This He does only in cases of desperate and wilful rebellion. Whenever Christ, the only Head of the church, manifests His spiritual power, either in *blessings* or in *judgments*, that is a *coming*, a *παρουσία*, a *presence*. There cannot be two *true* yet antagonist churches at once. There could not be both the typical and the antitypical as co-existing rivals—not the Jewish and the Christian. Yet the true church is always but one. It was *naturally possible* that Judaism might have melted into Christianity, had the Jews acknowledged Christ as the Messiah; but it was *morally impossible* on account of their rebelliousness. Therefore their fall and the rise of the Gentile church formed one combined event, con-

taining a “coming” both in *judgment to them* and in *blessing to the Gentiles*. The Gentile church, or present church-system, may also prove unfaithful and rebellious. Indeed it *has done so*, and has produced the antichristian system. That, too, must be destroyed; and its destruction will form one combined event, containing also a “coming” both in judgment and in blessing. It is *naturally possible* that this might take place without any great conflict, but it seems to be *morally impossible*. When the destruction of Antichrist shall have taken place, there will still be a kingdom of Christ on earth; and that, too, the same kingdom as before;—only, hitherto it has been in a suffering condition, it will then be triumphant; hitherto it has been *militant*, it will then be *peaceful*.

This view may help to explain one peculiarity in prophetic language, by introducing an important principle of prophetic interpretation. There is but one true church, whether patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian. One aspect of the true church may pass into another; and there may be both convulsions and the lapse of time at the periods of transition. To an eye that could look along the entire line of that church’s history, there might appear to be but one church and one convulsion; and, while so looking with intent directness, no *out-church condition* could be seen. This would arise from the facts of the case. There is, in reality, but one true church, though it has had a variety of aspects. The patriarchal church proper, specially considered, ended in the judgment of the flood. The transition period was between that and the exodus. The Hebrew church ended in the destruction of Jerusalem. The transition period was between that and the fall of pagan Rome. The Gentile church will end at the destruction of Antichrist, and the beginning of the millennium. How long the transition period may last, or what may be its nature and character, it is impossible to say. The whole church on earth will end at Christ’s real and personal second coming and the day of final judgment. The great and dreadful convulsions of that period will be exactly the same in *kind* as those which ended each previous aspect, and marked each intervening transition, but immeasurably more terrible in degree. What was true of each will be true of all, and true most signally of the last, ending all, and beginning the reign of illimitable eternity. In every age has this been realized, and in every moment is it at hand, in some

of its meanings and aspects. The warning call is always, "Watch! be ready!" And let this be always borne in mind, for encouragement or for warning, in mercy or in judgment, —Christ alone can begin, or end, any church-system.

I have no special desire to involve myself in the inextricable snare of the millennial controversy; but the subject seems to come so legitimately within my present province, that duty requires me to give at least an outline of some of the leading elements which ought to be calmly studied by those who wish to understand it scripturally. Let it be observed, first of all, that the *millennium* and the *second advent* of Christ are not connected in Scripture one way or another. There is no direct statement, either that the millennium precedes the advent, or that the advent precedes the millennium. The question, therefore, as to a pre-millennial advent must either be settled by collation of texts and by calm and fair reasoning, or left unsettled. The expression commonly used, as if it had but one meaning, "the coming of Christ," has a diversity of meanings, most of which have no reference to the second advent. These should be distinctly stated and explained, especially since it is the case that this diversity arises out of the difference in meaning of the Greek words used, which are, unfortunately, rendered by one English word.

The two leading Greek words are, *παρουσία* and *ἐρχόμενος*. There are also *ἐπιφάνεια* and *ἀποκάλυψις*; but as these are so well understood to mean respectively *manifestation*, or *brightness*, and *unveiling*, they do not require any further explanation. The word *παρουσία* occurs twenty-one times in the Gospels and Epistles, and in no instance does it necessarily mean *coming*, in the sense of motion from one place to another. I am disposed to say, that it *never* means Christ's personal advent from heaven to earth. In some of these instances it does not refer to Christ at all, but to the apostles and others. Even in their case, it means *presence*, not *coming*. It would give comfort and support to the soul in any kind of need for the *everywhere present God* to say, *Μὴ φοβεῖσθε, πάρεμι*, *Fear not, I am with you*; but there might continue to be at least *anxiety*, if it were only said, *I will be with you*.

This topic deserves to be traced a little further. The word *παρουσία* never *directly* means the second advent, and cannot rightly do so. Its true meaning is *spiritual presence and aid*.

Its very etymology intimates this ; *παρά* and *εἰμι*, I am beside you—I stand by you—I assist you ; but it has nothing to do with the idea of motion from one place to another. In the instances of its application to divine assistance, the idea of motion from one place to another is excluded. The word *ἐρχόμενος*, on the other hand, is the participle of the verb of motion, and it has relation necessarily to both place and time, or motion to or from place, or in place, consequently also in time. It is very generally connected with the idea of *judgment*, and may imply the second advent. The *παρουσία* sustains and develops truth, and destroys error, *because it is spiritual manifestation, and by that influence. It is always at hand, and demands constant watchfulness.* The *ἐρχόμενος* judges and punishes a faithless church, or sinful people, and finally the whole cosmical system. In a *providential* sense *it also* is always at hand. The *παρουσία* is connected chiefly with the idea of *eternity* ; the *ἐρχόμενος* is connected chiefly with the idea of *time*. There cannot properly be any note of time connected with *παρουσία* ; there may with the *ἐρχόμενος*. The *παρουσία* may co-exist with the millennium, but not the *ἐρχόμενος* ; for the *παρουσία* could be fully realized by a spiritual reign, the *ἐρχόμενος* only by the final judgment, which, again, would introduce an eternal *παρουσία*. Spiritual life in any soul is a *παρουσία* ; the sentence of judicial blindness is an *ἐρχόμενος*. It will be the *παρουσία*, *not* the *ἐρχόμενος*, that will destroy Antichrist. The *παρουσία* might introduce the millennium, and very probably will, as a spiritual influence developing truth and destroying error, though not as a personal appearance of Christ. The *ἐρχόμενος* might also introduce the millennium, as a providential judgment on guilty nations and apostate churches ; but not as a personal appearance of Christ, which cannot take place till the final judgment.

The idea of the millennium is suggested only by the language of the Apocalypse : it is not stated by Christ in the Gospels, nor by any of the apostles in the Epistles. The statements of Paul in the Epistle to the Thessalonians have no necessary connection with the millennium, and could not have suggested it. There is, however, a close analogy between the idea of Eden before the *fall*, and the idea of the millennium. But each of them is a *state*, or *condition*, and *has no internal history*. It cannot with any certainty be known what term of duration is

meant by the expression “a thousand years,” which we may call a *chiliasm*, or *millennium*. Its occurrence in a highly symbolic prophecy, and even its completeness as a round number, very strongly suggest the idea, that it does not mean literally a thousand years of ordinary computation.

Ever since the fall, there have been *two creations*,—*one*, the old, sin-smitten, doomed, and dying creation, a cosmical system; *the other*, the new, regenerated, promised, spiritual, living creation. The redeemed are the destined inhabitants of the *new creation* in its completed state, but their number must have been completed before the new heavens and the new earth can be created; and the new heavens and new earth must have been created before the new creation—redeemed men and their eternal abode—can be completed. This can only be by the *second coming of Christ, personally, with all His redeemed*, which cannot be till the number of the redeemed has been completed,—therefore not till after the millennium; otherwise the millennium must be a period during which none are redeemed. But the Apocalypse places the new heavens and new earth *after the millennium*; therefore the second advent and final judgment form one event; and that dread event takes place after the millennium, when time is ended, and *all has become eternal*, in the holy universe of HIM who LIVETH AND REIGNETH FOR EVER.

I have attempted to state and exemplify the evidence from prophecy on as brief a scale as possible, not because I regard it as of inferior importance, but because I had devoted so much time to the closely related topic of miracles, and had so far anticipated some portion of what might have been said on prophecy. Our attention has already been directed to the very close and mutually corroborative relation between miracles and prophecy. By bearing this in mind, we will not only feel that prophecy is necessarily a continually increasing evidence, each newly fulfilled prediction confirming and adding to all the past; but we will find that each newly fulfilled prediction revives also the evidence of the miracle in connection with which the prophecy was at first uttered. In this view we are still in possession of the evidence of miracles, not as directly wrought by the hand or word of God in our own day, but as placed again vividly before us in the fulfilment of the prophecy. Some authors even of high name concede to the infidel or the sceptic, that the evidence of testimony decays by the lapse of time, and that as testi-

mony decays, belief in miracles must decay also. This is not the case. We believe that Cæsar invaded Britain before the Christian era, and our belief that he did so is not weaker than it was well-nigh two thousand years ago ; yet it has only the evidence of testimony to rest on. That point, therefore, we do not concede. But to silence the cavil, we bring forward the evidence of prophecy, continually increasing in strength and cogency by means of its ever-recurring fulfilments ; and we direct attention to the miracles by which that prophecy was at first accompanied, and in the undeniable fact of the recent fulfilment we point to a present proof of the miracle. In the prophecy and the miracle, thus conjoined and both renewed, we have an irresistible and authoritative proof that the Bible is the true and living word of the one only living and true God.

PART II.—INTERNAL EVIDENCES.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIANITY *THE* TRUTH.



WHEN our Lord utters the axiomatic or proverbial saying, "By their fruits ye shall know them," He gives us a right to use this as a text, by means of which we may try accurately the reality and worth of many a pretension. It will be apparent, however, to every thoughtful mind, that even in this sacred declaration there is at least a tacit assumption of the important principle that man *can know* the real worth of any pretension, if he will rightly use the faculties that God has given him. That this is a very important principle will easily be seen; but let this be noted, that it has a twofold aspect and a twofold value. It looks in one of its aspects towards the possibility of detecting all false pretences and discovering reliable truth; and when rightly used in this direction, it secures to the observant and penetrating mind great confidence in all its procedure. But in its other direction it lays upon man the mighty obligation of trying all things, taking nothing merely upon trust, without inquiry or examination, because, perhaps, we were brought up in that belief,—“trying all things, and holding fast that which is best.” It is a great power and privilege that God has given to man, but it is an equal responsibility.

In the one of its aspects men are willing enough to use this power. They are very ready generally to set about stripping away all fallacious pretences, or what appears to them to be such; though men sometimes do manifest a strange and perverse facility in being deceived. But the other and more important aspect and quality of this power is not so readily employed, nay, it is very generally discountenanced. In matters

of religion especially, this power and prerogative is disclaimed. "What is truth?" is still the question which men seem to think themselves specially at liberty to ask, and leave unanswered; nay, to do so with an air of triumph, as if they had said something very great, and had succeeded in proving that truth cannot be known. It were but a mournful triumph for man if he were constrained to stand in blank imbecility and helplessness, not on the brink of a well in which truth lies deeply but not hopelessly hid, but on the brink of a vast fathomless abyss in which truth is eternally sunk. If the sceptic or the trifler will indulge his sneer, as he turns away from the pursuit, he may; but he ought to say no more than this, "*I have not found it, and will seek no more.*" There is a degree of earnestness in our age, which, I trust, will not permit many to rest satisfied with the scoffer's sneer, but will impel them to seek, and to continue seeking till they find. But there has also long been, and still remains, a large measure of that either scoffing scepticism or easy-minded indifferentism, which will not take the trouble to ascertain the truth in matters of religion, but wave it aside and say, "But who shall decide what is truth? Is it Popery at Rome? Episcopacy in England? Presbytery in Scotland? Mohammedanism in Turkey? Hinduism in India? Who shall decide? Why should I decide? It is far easier to leave every man to his own opinion." Truth, we reply, is *not* a matter of opinion. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

SEC. I. ADAPTATION OF THE GOSPEL TO MAN.

Let us now apply this test. The truth of any religious system may be known by its fruits. But this implies, as already shown, that man *can know* at least the *fruits*, and thence the *true nature* of that from which they sprang,—that is, there is in man a moral faculty given to him by his Creator, by means of which he can distinguish between *good* and *evil*, so that he can know *good moral fruits* from *bad* and *immoral*. If man had no such faculty, moral reasoning would be addressed to him in vain, and moral results set before him in vain. The continuous strain of moral precepts and admonitions contained in the Bible all presuppose this moral faculty in man. The direct statement, "By their fruits ye shall know them," pre-

supposes it, for it assumes that we *can* perceive these fruits, and know their real nature. We may add, that there is further necessarily presupposed, that a true religion will produce such fruits as the moral faculty will approve. We direct attention to these topics, and assume them without further proof at present, because we have already proved them all in our previous course of Natural Theology, and are therefore entitled to proceed, without doing more than mentioning them now.

When we use the expression, internal evidences of revelation, we mean to include both of the two correlated elements. These two are, *the word of God*, and *the soul of man*. If revelation were not the living word of the living God, and a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, it could not analyze the human soul as it does. If there were not in the human soul an intuitive, instinctive, and irrepressible tendency to feel, and know, and believe, in harmony with the word of God, that word would not constrain it to glow and tremble as it does beneath the deep, searching, thrilling power of each scriptural truth. The felt and undeniable responsive harmony and adaptation between the Bible and the human soul,—this is the *internal evidence*. It is not only internal in its twofold sense, already referred to, but in every sense. It is *internal* in the Bible; for it is not simply the external proofs, to which our attention has been directed, but its internal meaning. The historical proof is indisputable, as we have seen: the evidence of miracles is indisputable: the evidence of prophecy is indisputable. But when the *internal character* of the Bible is manifested and felt;—when its truths shine into the soul, like a new sun risen on mid-noon,—throb in the bosom, like a new heart within the man,—tremble through all his being, like a new life poured into him,—then he begins to know what internal evidence means;—then he begins to know both what the internal character of the Bible itself is, and what the character of God is, which it reveals to him, and also what his own character is, which he now begins to read in the awful light, not only of conscience, but of God's countenance. Every increase which a man thereby obtains of the knowledge of the Bible, and the knowledge of his own heart, is an increase of that internal evidence; and his growing knowledge is growing conviction.

The subject might be thus illustrated. Suppose a man of quick observant eye and mind were wandering alone in some

wild and rocky mountain pass, marking its rugged grandeur as he roamed along: on a sudden his attention is arrested by a large mass of rock in the path, and he fixes his gaze upon it, marking its very peculiarly pointed or angular projections, and its not less curious indentations, wondering probably how it had acquired so strange a shape. Ere long he raises his head and looks up to the lofty cliff that hangs in frowning majesty above him, and again his eye is arrested by a peculiar chasm or gap in the brow of that lofty and overhanging rock. Almost unconsciously for a while his eye travels between the peculiar fragment at his feet and the peculiar gap high above his head, till he finds himself comparing the projections in the one with the indentations of the other, and the indentations of the one with the projections of the other. So far as he can see, they appear to be absolutely identical. The kind of rock is the same, the configurations are the same, with only this difference, that where the one has a projection, the other has an indentation; which only completes the counterpart similarity. What *can* he conclude, but that the strangely shaped rock at his feet fell from the strangely riven and fissured cliff above his head? And this conclusion he thinks himself as well entitled to hold as if he had actually seen the rock beside him becoming loosened, detach itself, and fall. Now, let the human heart be the rocky fragment, and the Bible be the everlasting rock from which it fell; examine them both closely, minutely, repeatedly,—they perfectly coincide throughout. There is not a peculiarity in the human heart to which the Bible does not present a counterpart. Not a holy desire, not a sinful passion, not a wayward impulse is there in the human heart, which does not find itself detected, described, explained in the Bible. And many a secret tendency, that shot itself athwart the human bosom, like some unnoticed view in the crag, becomes exposed and apparent, as we prosecute the scrutiny, till we feel ourselves constrained to acknowledge, that the heart of man is the work of the same God of whom the Bible is the word; and that the Bible is the word of Him of whom man's heart is the work.

The subject thus suggested, and the view of it thus taken, opens up before us a course of almost boundless investigation, whether we direct our attention mainly to the Bible or to human nature. We can but trace the outline, or, rather, point rapidly

and discursively to a few of the leading elements of the subject. We quit now the historical, the miraculous, the prophetic, and direct attention chiefly to the *ethical*. When considering the ethical department of Natural Theology, the domain of the moral faculty, conscience, we attempted to ascertain its primary and essential principles. This we did, not as if we regarded conscience as entitled to decide what *is* right and wrong,—so arbitrarily and absolutely as if a thing became *right*, merely because conscience called it so,—or *wrong*, for a similar reason. Conscience does not *make* these distinctions; it but *perceives* them. The difference between right and wrong, good and evil, is eternal; but God has given to the human conscience so much of His own likeness, that it perceives and declares this distinction, whenever the subject is placed rightly before it. But sin has darkened and hardened conscience—not so far as to disable it from perceiving these distinctions generally, and in their more obvious aspects,—but so far as to render an enlightener, instructor, and strengthener, of the utmost value to man. The decisions of conscience are frequently either set aside, or violently overborne by prejudice and passion, and need the support of something more authoritative than themselves, but of kindred nature. This is exactly what Scripture does.

In taking a somewhat comprehensive survey of the regions of conscience, we were led to point out what we deemed the chief principles of morality; namely, the principles of benevolence, truth, justice, purity, and order. These principles we find to be universally accepted throughout the whole human race, to this extent, that all men think them right in all cases, except where their own selfishness is concerned. All men think it right for all men to be benevolent *to them*, to be truthful *to them*, to act with justice *to them*, to maintain purity of moral conduct *to them*, to preserve all principles of decorum, respect, and social order *to them*. It is only when mean and miserable selfishness, or vehement passion, overbears the moral faculty, that these principles are violated; and even then, the men by whom they are violated, with regard to others, wish them maintained with regard to themselves. Men never approve in the abstract of the violation of these great principles of universal morality. Now it requires but a glance over the pages of the Bible to perceive, that these great prin-

ciples are everywhere most strenuously and authoritatively inculcated and enforced. The whole Hebrew law, in all its multiform statements, instances, and illustrations, is an exhibition and application of *benevolence*, almost to the extent of lavish charity, giving and showing kindness before it had been asked, far more profusely than even Christian nations yet exemplify,—of *truth*, to a degree that few even of the most truthful can yet realize,—of *justice*, even to the extreme of retaliation in kind—"an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," or "restore him fourfold,"—of *purity*, to the very extreme of refined oriental fastidiousness and sensitive delicacy, throughout all the relations of life,—and of *order*, maintaining respect to rank, station, office, and position, without one shade of cringing servility, and without giving countenance to the slightest degree of haughty arrogance or cruel despotism. I do not say that these high and holy moral principles were all and always observed by the Hebrew people; but I do say that they are all embodied in their code of public laws and social regulations, to such a degree as cannot be found in the legal institutions and moral observances of any other people, ancient or modern. And further, let it be carefully noted, that throughout the Bible, the admonitions, exhortations, reproofs, severe censures, threatenings of punishment, and denunciations of coming judgment, on account of their sinful neglect or violations of these principles, uttered by the prophets at the command of Jehovah,—all corroborate and confirm this view—all tend to prove, that the moral precepts of the Bible are precisely in harmony with the deepest and most universal moral principles of the human heart.

We can trace the moral harmony and adaptation still further. Moral principles can ascend into the region of *rights* and *duties*, or into that region of high mutual and reciprocal rights and duties, originating in necessary relations. These we have already elsewhere termed, the right of personal security, the right of property, the right of contract, and the right of all that belongs to family relationship. Without the maintenance of these to some degree, there could be no social state. But these rights have all their counterpart duties. What *I* have a *right* to demand from every other man, it is *my duty* to concede to every other man, and his right to demand from me. The reciprocity is abstractly absolute.

Every man has a right to his life, his liberty, and the secure enjoyment of these, from the moment of his birth till the moment of his death, or till he forfeit that right by the commission of some great crime. This needs no proof. Every free-born man instinctively feels and claims this right; and if he be truly a free man, as instinctively concedes it. But when the Bible began to be written,—when Moses began to write its earliest portion,—there was no such principle recognised in the world. There were kings, and princes, and nobles, and priests, and slaves,—nay, they were all slaves in a very absolute sense; for he who regards himself as owing no duty to any man, will find that, to the same extent, no man will owe any duty to him: while he tyrannizes to the utmost of his power over others, he will find that they are tyrannizing reciprocally over him, and keeping him constantly in a state of slavish and abject terror. The Hebrew people were the first free people that ever trod the earth; and the laws of that people were the first laws that ever gave security to life and liberty throughout a free community. The same thing may be said, with equal propriety, in regard to the right of property. It looks, we admit, very plausible, when we turn our attention to the patriarchal rule, and look on all the land as belonging to the tribe, held nominally by the chief, as the head of the tribe, but as representing the tribe, and in behoof of the tribe. But this beautiful, or seemingly beautiful, theory is almost certain very rapidly to degenerate into a despotism, and the power of the chief to become absolute and arbitrary. It did so among the Arabs; it did so among the Celtic clans in Scotland; it did so on a grand scale in ancient Assyria; it did so even under the feudal system, although in a manner peculiar to that system, embodying the idea of military tenure. But the right of property among the Jews was derived and held direct from Jehovah. The land of Palestine was His, and given by Him to the people—given inalienably,—so inalienably that it could not be absolutely sold for debt, but must revert to the family of the original proprietor at the year of Jubilee,—so inalienably, that Naboth durst not sell his patrimony to the king; and the sinful tyrant had to “kill,” before he could “take possession.” I may merely glance at one inevitable result. The right of property is at once the basis and the security of all other social rights, and a strong

inducement to all social virtues. It is even, in a very large measure, the essence of all true patriotism. The man who has but a humble clay-built, straw-roofed cottage, but can call that humble cottage his own, will feel his manly heart beat as high in the bold determination to defend it, as does the heart of the lordly owner of the most magnificent palace. Many a time, indeed, sin chilled the hearts and paralyzed the hands of the free race of Abraham; but when freed from that benumbing spell, they manifested invincible courage, stern determination, and a terrible energy of will, from which great armies recoiled, —baffled, repulsed, beaten, and dismayed.

The right of contract is here used as a compendious expression for all those reciprocal rights and interests that arise in the common intercourse of men with each other in the social relations of common life. By family rights, we mean the expansion of all the personal rights into that still more tender and even personal aspect, which they assume as they combine around a wedded pair, and constitute the domestic relation. In every age and country the human heart realizes these rights, both those of contract, and those of the family, and strives to retain them with the most desperate tenacity. Without the rights of contract, there can be no intercourse between man and man on a secure and peaceful basis. All the due and honourable interchange of reciprocal advantages, especially when these involve the wide range of commercial transactions, depend upon the certainty and binding obligation of the rights of contract. Those rights we find all definitely stated and secured, on a principle of fairness and reciprocity, in the Bible; and various transactions are recorded, in which they were kept with the greatest accuracy,—as, for example, Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah for a burial place. All the fine and delicate specialties of family rights are also indicated and maintained in the moral laws and rules of the Bible; and it requires but a thought to perceive how important they are to the proper culture of human nature. How much more earnestly men toil and cultivate their noblest faculties, when they have before them fair prospect of leaving to their families the inheritance of their prolonged and arduous toils, or the much more precious inheritance of an honoured name! The moral and social laws of the Hebrew people, as these were contained in their sacred Scriptures, secured all these moral principles

and social rights, to a degree utterly unknown in any ancient country, even the most civilised; and, we may add, to a degree not yet equalled in any modern country, however high may be its boast of civilisation, and though it possess the Bible for its instructor and guide, and bear the name of Christian.

When moral principles and moral rights become universally known, are embodied in the code of laws of a country, and become habitually respected and practised, they may then be termed moral and social virtues. In such a case there will be a genial and gracious consent between the public and the individual conscience. What the law universally enjoins, every man will delight to practise. But the laws may be too good for the people. *Their* mean and selfish passions may be too strong and ill-governed to give ready obedience to moral principles so pure, and to concede social rights so adapted to secure general welfare. In that case there will be a frequent, almost a constant, violation of principles and rights, and a neglect of duties, the propriety of which, nevertheless, all admit. The code of law will be preserved as a national record; but its precepts will be generally neglected or explained away, and their real meaning allowed to fall into comparative oblivion. This is human nature. The idea of moral and social virtue is always higher than its practice. That idea may remain in its laws; and by its occasional enforcement will be continually tending to train the public mind to active social virtue, all the while that the private personal virtue of individuals may be low. Thus, in our own country, the instinct of public honour is generally much higher than would be the honour of the individual, if he could indulge all his private passions and predilections unseen. Conscience is, therefore, the human guardian of all the moral principles, moral rights, and social virtues; and in its highest action is the righteous lawgiver, though it frequently is unable to enforce its laws. But revealed religion is sent to be its guide and support. Revealed religion becomes the soul and heart, the spirit and the life, of conscience. Most readily, and even, as it were, instinctively and intuitively, does conscience receive and respond to the dictates of revealed religion. It feels in its inmost being, in the very consciousness of conscience, that the Bible, the record of revealed religion, is the living and abiding word of the living and true God.

I shall not further prosecute this course of thought, which

may, perhaps, appear to be somewhat vague and indefinite. It has been adopted, however, because to whatsoever extent it is adequately understood, to that extent it will be found to have made the harmony between the Bible and the human mind apparent. There is more importance in taking a comprehensive view in this manner than may at once appear. It is customary with one class of individuals to say, that they find it impossible to believe the Bible, because it contradicts the principles of morality which the human heart instinctively feels, and the mind implicitly believes and obeys. We at once boldly assert, that the Bible confirms them all, refines them all, elevates them all, spiritualizes them all, sanctions and enforces them all, in a manner transcendently sublime. Will they deny this? Let them, then, produce their objections. They try to avoid any very definite accusation, but complain in general terms of the incredible cruelty ascribed to the God of the Old Testament. Be more special still, we ask and insist. Produce your special complaint. One tries to raise an accusation against the plagues of Egypt. You believe, then, the Bible narrative on that point. Well, look back a little, and take the attempt to exterminate the whole Hebrew race into account, by the command to destroy all the male children. Judgment after judgment falls upon the proud tyrant, enforcing the demand for their freedom; and it is only when nothing else will move him that the first-born in each family perishes. "But think of the cruel destruction of the whole nations of Palestine," says another; "a merciful and just God could never have given so merciless a command." "Merciful and just!" Rightly expressed so far. God is *merciful*, but also *just*, and His justice is the guardian of His mercy. The sins of these Canaanitish nations were atrocious and hideous, beyond what can be named. It was an act of holy justice to cut them off from polluting the earth; but it was an act of mercy to do it by the hand of man, on the declared ground that their "iniquities had come to the full," that other men might fear to commit similar atrocities. And be it remembered, that it was in their power to flee, that many of them did flee and escape to other lands, and that even those who contrived to frame a deceptive truce were preserved alive, and their preservation afterwards divinely ratified.

"But the bloody and treacherous deed of Jael is praised, and praised, too, by a prophetess. Can you defend that mur-

derous act?" Look carefully at the passage. It was an attempt of the fugitive Canaanites to return from the neighbouring countries and recover possession of the land. And remember the kind of treatment to which these Canaanites exposed women, and doubtless had exposed the Hebrew women, wherever they had the power. It was the voice of a woman, Deborah, that roused the men of Israel to rise against the barbarous tyrants. It was the hand of a woman, smarting under the sense of the intolerable outrages that had been perpetrated on other women, which struck the vengeful blow. It was the triumphal song of a woman that recorded the deed in exulting strains. If the hand of a woman could at this hour reach and smite the atrocious monster, Nana Sahib, is there one woman in Christendom that would not applaud the deed? The fate of Sisera is recorded, and the exulting song of Deborah is recorded, as portions of a truthful narrative of facts;—human nature can well understand how truthful they are, in the measure in which it can feel similar facts;—but the Bible narrative simply records what took place, without giving the events themselves either praise or blame. We may fairly and fearlessly let the passage answer for itself to all who can understand it.

There would be no difficulty in going through the whole list of the complaints and objections made by captious opponents of the Bible, and showing that they are all in harmony with the truest morality, or are resolvable into acts of divine sovereignty which transcend our scrutiny; or that the apparent contradictions which some keen-eyed critics think they can discover, prove to contain real confirmations, and sometimes even very unexpected confirmations, of things previously thought doubtful.

SEC. II. MORAL AND SOCIAL RESULTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

Repeatedly have I directed attention to the principle, that the tendency of any kind of worship is to set its stamp upon the character of the worshipper. This is a principle of universal application; and we are entitled to avail ourselves of it in our present course of remark. It is in fact but another application of the principle contained in the axiomatic saying, "By their fruits ye shall know them." It is truly *internal evidence*, externally manifested. In the previous section we inquired into the nature of those universal moral principles in which all nations

concur, and found them to be in perfect harmony with the great moral principles of the Bible,—found also that the Bible actually appeals to them, as well as approves of them, throughout. This we regard as a very strong and comprehensive kind of *internal evidence*—one, in truth, to which we may fairly challenge an appeal, when dealing with an antagonist. His complaint is to this effect:—"You have no doubt made out a good case on behalf of the Bible, so far as *historical veracity*, the *evidence of miracles*, and the *evidence of prophecy* are concerned. But there is a moral power in the mind itself stronger than all external evidence can ever be; and though you might satisfy or silence my *intellect*, yet if my *moral nature* recoil, it will be impossible for me to believe. Now my moral nature *does* recoil. I cannot accept the moral principles of the Bible, and therefore I cannot believe it."

Were this course of argument fairly used by a fair and candid reasoner, we should be glad to accompany him on a scrutiny of all the moral principles stated in the Bible to whatsoever extent he might please. But it is generally only a plausible evasion. In the previous section we adopted a course which was in reality an anticipation of the inquiry into which such an investigation might lead. This may be explained and expanded a little. When a complaint is made against any event or principle, that it is inconsistent with sound morality, we may *either* meet the objection directly, and attempt to prove its moral propriety, *or* we may institute an inquiry into the whole subject of morals, and obtain such a sound and comprehensive view as will solve all difficulties, meet all objections, and furnish a ready answer to all inquiries. The latter is not only by far the most complete method of reply, but it is in reality the only one that can be absolutely conclusive; for if we should commence to discuss point by point, we should be constrained, in almost every instance, to carry our inquiry back and back in search of primary principles by which to decide relatively to the moral nature of each separate case. We *have* already proved what are the universal principles of morality admitted by all the world, as even Natural Theology apart from revelation can prove them; and we *have also proved*, that the morality of the Bible is in perfect harmony with all that the human heart can imagine most true, pure, lovely, and of good report,—with this difference, that the morality of the Bible infinitely transcends even the visions of

the poet and the meditations of the philosopher, so that no possible objection can be against it on this ground.

This ought to be enough, with a few instances of such special application as might show how special cases could be met and answered. But there is one explanatory statement which we deem it right to make. It has been already said that the Bible morality infinitely transcends all that the most gifted minds have ever thought or imagined. This is true, but not the whole truth. When the poet conceives or imagines his golden age, and depicts its scenes of harmony and peace, he leaves out the element of *moral evil*; so does the philosopher, whether he thinks out an Atlantis, or an Utopia, or even a gorgeous cloud-land fiction, such as Teutonic genius delights to fashion in its waking dreams. But such morality, so fashioned, is not only imperfect,—it is unreal, it is fictitious. Never since the fall has human nature been without moral evil; therefore the man, be he poet or philosopher, who frames a world or a system of morality, without taking the element of moral evil into consideration, and even pointing out its pernicious tendencies, may produce a beautiful fiction, but does not produce what suits this sinning, suffering, weeping, dying world. The Bible, on the other hand, proclaims, with sad but unhesitating severity, the whole dread history of sin, misery, and death. The moral principles of the Bible seek no secluded happy valley in which to dream away their listless, languid existence. Bible morality goes forth like some strong earnest martyr, with bleeding heart, pale cheek, and darkened brow, ready to confront every evil, to endure every trial, and to die in the cause of truth, and righteousness, and peace. This Bible morality is not placed before us with all the exquisite polish of literary beauty, such as genius at ease delights to mould into fascinating gracefulness. We meet it in all the common events of familiar and domestic life; we see it engaged in the collisions and strifes, or the peaceful and bland courtesies, of neighbourhoods and villages; we meet it borne down, bleeding, suffering, resisting, enduring, under the fierce and lawless outrages of cruel oppressors; we mark its conduct on kingly thrones, in gorgeous temples, amid scenes of festivity, on the bloody battle-field, in the day of triumph, and seated on the tribunal of stern, retributive judgment. Will any man who can think, and feel, and who knows what human nature is, expect to find in a truthful and yet brief narrative

such diversified facts and events related as they actually occurred, and not one word uttered, not one incident recorded, but what quite agrees with his holiday notions, such as idle fancy fashions in its flowery arbour? What the Bible expressly approves is always infinitely right; but the Bible narrative contains, and must needs contain, the brief and unexplained record of many a rash deed done, and many a sinful word spoken, even by good men in their hour of trial, pain, and passion, without one mark of comment, but also without one indication of approval. The great lesson is given in the entire event; and the mind that can apprehend the whole will learn it truly, while the mind that can perceive only the partial and incidental errors, may learn nothing but the error or the habit of captious cavilling at minor points. The true cause of marvel is, that while the Bible, with most absolute, undisguising frankness, states not the merits only, but also the faults of every person and of every act, the result is, like the perfect union of the prismatic sun-rays, the clear white light of heavenly holiness and truth.

Let us now resume the application of our text in the way already indicated, "By their fruits ye shall know them." There is a continuity and a congruity in the mental and moral history of every people; and the deep secret of this continuity is to be found in its religion. The moral character of the Deity which any nation worships, or, with regard to the mass of the population, the religious ceremonies and forms of worship which they observe, will form ultimately the essence, the life, the formative power, which moulds and constitutes their character. It is absolutely necessary that this point be rightly understood, if we wish to form a right conception of national character. For although we have attempted to state the principles of universal morality, and believe that we have done so truly, it may easily be seen that if, in any instance, any strong and generally observed element of religious worship contradicts the counterpart principle of morality, the moral principle will generally yield. This might be extensively traced and illustrated. A few instances must suffice. Take for example the principle of benevolence. Could that be expected to hold in check the fierce rapine of an invading army of the worshippers of the god Mars? They had but to place a bloody trophy in his temple, and present a rich offering of spoils to his war-breathing priest, and every feeling of benevolence or pity was swallowed up in

the wild and fiery shout of victory, while the strong-thrown spear led on to other wars.

Or what wily worshipper of the crafty Hermes,—whose praise it was that he could steal from Jove his thunder, and from Apollo his arrows,—could value truth, when deceit, and treachery, and falsehood were regarded as the most approved acts of worship? What regard for the principle of moral purity could be expected to prevail, where forms of worship required that every young female should expose herself for at least one whole day and night to the embrace of any one who might claim it, at the temple of Melitta, the Babylonian Venus? Or, to change the hideous subject, what regard for personal security, for the right of property, or for any social or domestic rights, could be either entertained or preserved, where forms of worship laid all these prostrate before a priesthood and a despot? There might be laws recorded in the statute books of such nations; but though these might contain some of the leading principles of morality, they could not be enforced, and they were little better than a public mockery.

The truth is, that the moral code of no ancient nation stood high, or contained anything like the speculative morality of the philosophers, with the single exception of the Jews; and theirs was both immeasurably higher than that of any other nation, and was actually realized, because it was contained in the Bible, which was their divinely given code of both written and practical law. It may be safely stated, as a universal axiom, that no law can rise much higher than the morality of the community, because it cannot be enforced. And it is equally certain that the morality of any people cannot rise higher than the morality of its worship, because its worship will bias or control its conscience, causing it to receive or regard as good many a thing which conscience, left to itself, would call evil. Religious sanctions, or what are regarded as such,—though the right term would be *superstitions*,—can strangely and terribly overbear both conscience and natural affection. How else could it have ever been, that in one country there might often be seen a delicate woman tottering slowly along with a female infant of a few days old in her arms, till she reached the brink of a mighty river, and then with averted look cast it into the surging waters, all roughened as they were with the scaly backs of alligators? Or, in another, an aged man, no longer fit for the

toils of war or the chase, carried by his own sons to a recently dug pit in the forest, and there cast alive into that horrible grave by the very hands that drew their warm blood from the now thin blue veins of that old withered patriarch of the woods? Yet when, a few years since, a Christian soldier prohibited infanticide in India, nature speedily asserted her moral supremacy; and but a short time elapsed till many an Indian mother held aloft her living child as Colonel Walker passed, invoking blessings on his head for its preserved life. And the labours of such men as Brainerd, in the vast American forests, have saved many a feeble and hoary-headed Red Indian from perishing by the parricidal hands of his own now gospel-enlightened sons.

All this proves—and innumerable illustrations of it might be given—that the morality of the Bible is not only the truest, deepest, most compassionate, and most gracious morality of the human heart, but also that it possesses the blessed power of rescuing the human heart from the fearfully cruel darkness and degradation of sin and superstition, that it may beat again responsive to the tender, gracious, and generous dictates of nature, and to the nobler and holier promptings and commands of nature's God. But it is when we trace the history of Christianity, and mark the wonders it has wrought, even while it has had to contend with all the waywardness and wickedness of the fallen heart of men,—it is then that we can best trace the character of the Bible, and understand its true internal evidence. It may be at once interesting and instructive to glance at the outline of such an inquiry.

When Christianity first appeared on earth, the world was in a strange and terrible condition. Greek philosophy had given a deadly blow to Greek religion, and sophistry was playing fantastic tricks with the disappearing phantom. Judaism had split itself into two, and its pharisaical formalism was waging a deadly conflict with its sadducean scepticism. Right, everywhere, had sunk beneath the power of might. Bold, unblushing vice trampled on every semblance of morality; and poverty and wretchedness groaned in deepest misery, while pride, and wealth, and luxury held on their wanton and licentious revelry. But Christianity appeared; and though assailed by power, and cruelty, and malice, and craft, and murderous persecution, it advanced, "conquering and to conquer." The common people, when allowed to follow their own spontaneous

inclinations, when not blinded, misled, and incited to frenzy by more malevolent and intriguing leaders, received it gladly, welcoming its message of mercy. Its pure and generous moral life soon began to diffuse a secret and unwonted joy and peace around. Not only a *pure morality*, as we find it in the Gospels and Epistles, infinitely transcending anything that had ever existed on earth before,—though it had been both foreshadowed and predicted in the prophets,—but also a *holy spirituality*, the very earnest and foretaste of heaven, began to pervade the mind of the increasing and expanding Christian community. A kindred element soon appeared, and began to make its influence felt. The instruction of the young was felt to be equally a duty and a privilege, and the systematic training of catechumens became general. Learning arose, true learning, but especially in the form of sacred learning. It began to produce a new literature; and while it both preserved and diffused the knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, Hebrew and Greek, it called forth in the church a new literary life, prepared to supply the want to the human mind which the rapid extinction of Greek and Roman literature began to make apparent.

There are many who are unaware of the real value of the ancient literature of the early Christian church, and probably more who are ready to condemn it as full of idle and superstitious fables. But it ought to be generally known, as is well enough known to some, that there is a very valuable Christian literature belonging to the second and third centuries, and reaching far into the fourth, which well deserves to be read and studied. It was not till after that period that it began to be overgrown with the legends of the monks, and the corruptions of the commencing Papal system; and even then both sides of that literature deserve to be studied, that we may adequately understand the character of a period so full of elements of great power, either for evil or for good. It is quite possible, even in that period, to mark the growing intensity and power of true scriptural principles, as well as to perceive the deepening gloom of the now fast advancing Papal darkness. Each can be traced distinctly; and it ought to be done by all those who wish to understand correctly in what manner, under the guidance and the protection of Providence, a true and living Christianity continued to advance, through the midst of

growing darkness and increasing persecution, preserving the Bible free, while Rome was striving to confine it in darkness, and preparing for the time when it should again go forth to enlighten the world.

One point must be noted, even in passing hastily on. Although Christendom was fast sinking into Popery, and a true Christianity was becoming grossly obscured, yet the nations called Christian were constantly acquiring ascendancy over all the other nations in the world who retained Paganism and Pagan worship. Not even the fierce fanaticism of the Saracen and the Turk could enable them to maintain their bold aggressive invasions. Freedom began to grow up in Europe, not in consequence of the encouragement and support of Popery, but because there was still so much of true Christianity in the very Papal system, that considerable numbers caught something of the true free spirit of the gospel, and began to struggle into the realms of light and liberty. The morality of the gospel, dispelling to some extent the immorality and the gloom of Popery,—the Bible, proclaimed from time to time by some of the priests whose minds it had delivered from the tyranny of Rome,—all tended to give to modern, or comparatively modern, Europe an elevation of character which had never been known to the ancient world, even in its most enlightened days. Even this is a powerful instance of the internal evidence of the indestructible truth and life of real Christianity, which could recover from such a death-like sleep as that of the dark middle ages. No false religious system could have sunk into such a deadly swoon, and have again revived. A false religion may for a time advance with the rushing urgency of its new fanatical life, and may even remain stationary for a period, so long as all other things are torpid and still around it; but, when other vitalities spring up, while *it* has no new vitality, it must decay, and die, and disappear. The mythology of Greece and Rome has passed away like those of Egypt, Chaldea, Persia, and Phœnicia; and they can never return to darken the world and torment mankind. Popery alone, of spurious religions, can manifest, and has manifested, a kind of resuscitation, and may do so again, because there may still remain so much of true Christian life and truth in its doctrinal tenets as to give it a species of revival,—a revival, however, which would expedite its destruction by the process of evolving all its vitality into a

condition that could not continue united to the mass that is already festering in death at Rome.

This very expression tends to suggest the contrast to which we now wish to draw attention. There is a very marked contrast between the results of true revealed religion and every false religion, and between true Christianity and all perversions of it. In the case of every false religion, the prevailing state of the vast preponderating proportion of the people must be, and must continue to be, ignorance and servility. A false priesthood cannot allow people to think, else they will think for themselves, and cease to grovel beneath their priestcraft. Ignorance secures their abject submissiveness. This condition suits the tyrant's purposes equally well; therefore priestcraft and despotism will always league together. But a people in such a condition can never rise high in true civilisation—certainly not in cultivation. Art, and skill, and handicraft may reach a very considerable degree of perfection; but true science and expansive literature can make little progress, cannot be truly encouraged, must be repressed by the priest and the despot, lest the lofty, cultivated mind should assert its dignity, and maintain its freedom. The ancient Egyptians could construct pyramids, and tombs, and temples, and colossal statues and sphinxes, and encrust them over with sculptured inscriptions and brilliant colours; but they had no literature and no liberty, and they sunk into degradation. Greece had art, and science, and genius, and a partially known literature; but the mass of its people continued sunk in ignorance, immorality, and even in slavery. "Pray, write for me the name of Aristides in this shell; I cannot write, and I wish to vote for his banishment," said an Athenian to Aristides himself, whom he did not even personally know. "Why, what injury has he ever done you?" "None; but I hate to hear him always called 'The Just.'" Moral and political disease and death were rapidly advancing in Athens then.

"Alexandria has fallen into the hands of the faithful," said the Moslem messenger to the caliph Omar; "and there is an enormous library among the spoils; what shall be done with the books?" "If they agree with the Korân, they are of no use, for it contains all that is necessary to be known; if they differ from it, they deserve to be destroyed. They are either useless or bad; let them be burned!" So perished that famous

library, collected chiefly by the labour and learning of the Neo-Platonic philosophers and the early Christian church : Egypt became the basest among the nations, and Mohammedanism proved that it could not be the religion of enlightened and cultivated man ; *nor can it yet !*

“ This is a terrible invention ! It will make all men equal : it will uncrown kings : it will bring down even the Pope ; but it will be a great thing for mankind ! ” said a man of thoughtful mind, as he sat gazing on a copy of the Bible, recently printed by Laurence Koster. Nor did he greatly misconceive the consequences certain to follow the invention of printing, and the diffusion of literature. It cannot, indeed, make all men equal, for men are not created with equal powers of mind ; but it may raise all men above the degradation of ignorance and slavery. It need not uncrown kings ; but it may put an end to all despotisms, and give universality to free constitutional governments. It *will*, however, bring down the Pope ; because Popery is not compatible with the light of mental, moral, social, and spiritual freedom, and must vanish in the blaze of their broad, advancing day.

The conflict between light and darkness has been long waged in this world, where sin strives to darken, and revelation to enlighten, mankind. But it was long compassed round with darkness, and the real nature of the combat hidden in the surrounding gloom. It must henceforth be waged in the broad light of open day. Even literature and science are favourable to truth, for truth hails them as friends, and encourages their endeavour to promote human welfare. No inquisition can now constrain a Galileo to sign his recantation. No priesthood can prevent the intelligent traveller from perceiving the fallen and degraded state of Spain, Portugal, and Italy, compared with Protestant countries ; or the sharply marked contrast between a Popish and a Protestant canton in Switzerland, or a Popish or Protestant county in Ireland. The contrast is strikingly terrible, and it is terribly instructive. Everywhere throughout all the world the conflict rages, and the contrast is displayed. Mohammedanism, true to its deadly instincts, has raised a storm of fierce war and hideous crime ; and after having long held the fairest portions of the world in barbarism and half desolation, is destined, we may well trust, to perish in the terrible tempest it has raised. Popery in Ireland is raising its voice in horrid

sympathy with licentious and bloody Hinduism; and in doing so, is but filling up the cup of its iniquity, which will ultimately become the cup of judgment. For neither the false religions of heathendom, nor the corruptions of Popery, can any longer hide their crimes in darkness. The eye of God was always on them; but now the public eye of mankind is on them also. And although it ought to have been a more overawing thought that God always saw them, yet such is the hardened insensibility of the human mind, that it can disregard or forget God's presence, when it will shrink from the open commission of evil deeds before a fellow-creature. And the light of the Bible is everywhere giving fresh clearness of perception and propriety of judgment to the public mind and conscience. All false religions, and all perversions of the true religion, must now confront the great, open, Bible-enlightened eye of the public mind and conscience, and must abide its close scrutiny and inevitable judgment. Bible Christianity, and that alone, can both kindle the light of science and literature, and live unveiled and unalarmed, in the searching brightness, not of their light only, but of the light of heaven itself,—the light of God's own countenance.

The *external* evidence of Christianity lights up the *internal*. The *internal* shines through Christianity, in the life, the moral purity, the social wellbeing, the constitutional freedom, the mental cultivation, and the enlightenment of Christian churches, peoples, and communities, till it becomes also an *external evidence*, known and read universally. The result is absolutely a necessity of human progress, under the true and righteous government of God; for all this blaze of growing light, and all the results to which it must lead, are but a manifestation of that government. Heathenism and Mohammedanism have assumed their position on the battle-field for the last great conflict. Popery must ere long do the same, and seems already mustering its dark hosts. Infidelity, in every one of its many aspects, not only must also meet the armies of light and truth, but has been already struck through and through by their clear shafts. The huge western sensuality, Mormonism, which blasphemously assumes the name of religion, cannot bear even the obscured clearness of morality, and must speedily burst like some ill-omened pestilential vapour, pierced by living light. The Bible alone—the revealed religion of the word of God—

can not only survive and shine in the midst of that searching radiance which its own light elicited, cherishes, and sustains, but, like a clear and perfect chrysolite, girt round with white, strong, ardent flame, will shine all the more brightly as it fills the central essence of truth's consuming or refining fires. It is like light : it reveals everything, and itself also, by its essential brightness. It is like life : it knows every dead thing by contrast with itself, and it knows itself in that living contrast. It *shines* and *lives*, because it is DIVINE TRUTH.

DIVISION III.

INTEGRITY AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.



WE have now traced at least the main outlines of the first and second divisions of our course, and are about to commence the third. By the *first* we were taught that the highest achievement of human reason, endeavouring to obtain some knowledge of God, may arrive at the deep conviction that there *must be*, and *is*, ONE INFINITE, ETERNAL, PERSONAL GOD, the Creator and Governor of the universe, but cannot obtain any intercourse with Him, or direct knowledge of Him; that everything around us, and very specially our own consciousness and moral nature, constrain us to believe that He is a righteous God; but that while all nature obeys His command and is at peace, we have disobeyed, and are both miserable and full of guilty terror through dread of future retribution; that from this state of criminality and wretchedness we cannot rescue ourselves, and cannot even conceive the possibility of being rescued, unless God both *reveal* a method and *Himself interpose* for our deliverance; and that thus we may obtain some basis for entertaining the hope of a revelation, rendering it desirable that there *should be*, and probable that there *has been*, and *is*, a *supernatural and divine revelation*. To this point a profound and candid study of Natural Theology has conducted us, leaving us in the condition of being anxiously ready to investigate with solemn care the claims of whatever assumed the character of a revelation.

The *second* subject of our inquiry, or our second division, introduced us to the study of the sacred Scriptures, as claiming to be the very revelation which we so greatly need; and the question was then, "Have we sufficient evidence to prove that a supernatural revelation has actually been given; and that such evidence sustains the claims of the record before us?"

In prosecuting the inquiry to which we were thus solemnly and impressively called, we were led to consider the historical character, which we found to be above all rivalry ; the evidence of miracles ; the evidence of prophecy ; and those internal experimental evidences which relate chiefly to its moral character and consequences. In this division also, the result is absolute, producing in our minds the most unhesitating certainty that God has vouchsafed to man a gracious *supernatural revelation*, and that *this revelation* is THE BIBLE.

The third great question, introducing the third division of the course, now demands investigation. That question is : "Have we a complete, genuine, authentic, and infallible record of this supernatural revelation?" That this question still remains will be evident from this consideration : that even admitting the fact of such a revelation having been given to man, yet, that as this took place many centuries ago, there might arise painful doubts whether the records of that supernatural revelation have been all transmitted to us in such a condition of completeness and authenticity as to deserve and command our convictions that we really possess, in all its genuine and authoritative integrity, the pure, infallible, and incorruptible word of the living and true God. It is imperatively necessary for us to come to some clear and well-founded conclusion on this point, that we may know whether we really possess in the Bible a true record of that communication from heaven, so free from any intermixture of human error as to render it still an absolutely authoritative standard of sacred truth. The chief topics that will demand our attention in this division are those that relate to the *canon*, the *inspiration* of Scripture, and the sole and exclusive *authority* of Scripture.

CHAPTER I.

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE.

SEC. I. THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.



THE word canon (*kanon*) was early applied to that collection of the sacred writings which was universally received as of divine authority. The simple meaning of the word is a *rule* or *standard*. It occurs in the New Testament itself in that direct sense, though not then restricted to what we may now term its technical or ecclesiastical sense. But it is now well known in its specially applied meaning,—the collected sacred writings, combined into the one book called the Bible. The question now arises, How, or by whom, or by what authority, was the canon formed? You are well aware that it contains many treatises written by a variety of authors, during the course of a considerable extent of time. Taking the entire period from the time of Moses, 1491, till that of Malachi, 397, according to the most commonly received chronology, the whole duration would be about 1100 years, or somewhat more, from the commencement of the canon by Moses till its close by Malachi.

The reason why the books of Moses,—the Pentateuch, as these five books are called,—form the beginning of the canon, is obvious. His manifest mission from Jehovah to be both the leader and the lawgiver of the people, who only now emerged into the condition of a people, and “God’s chosen people,” rendered his writings necessarily at once the archives of the nation, and the sacred writings in which their religious principles, ordinances, and duties were primarily and authoritatively contained. Now, the first distinctive principle of the canon may here be clearly perceived. In all instances Moses spoke and wrote as God inspired and taught him. The spirit of prophecy was the basis, the living power, of all the writings of Moses. It may seem to follow already, that the primary

and indispensable condition of the canon is the presence of the spirit of prophecy in the writer of any book that is to be received. This, therefore, we adopt as the *first principle* of *canonicity*. Let it also be noted, that while the original writings of Moses were deposited in or beside the ark of the covenant, and along with or beside the tables of the law, and kept by the priests as their custodiers, copies of them were freely made and diffused by the Levites throughout the whole body of the people.

The books of Joshua and Judges may perhaps seem of questionable authority; as also the few verses at the close of Deuteronomy, which record the death of Moses. But the question is, Was the prophetic spirit withdrawn, or still present? because, if still present, there was no difficulty. That the prophetic spirit was granted to Joshua himself is obvious on the face of the narrative; and this is sufficient explanation, so far. That the prophetic spirit was repeatedly present, in peculiarly necessitous junctures, during the times of the Judges, is also apparent; and there are indications to show that a series of written narratives were kept and preserved throughout that period. But further, we find that the prophet Samuel, during the time of his long administration, founded what are called "schools of the prophets," which could not of course be places in which men were taught to predict future events, but places in which young spiritually minded or religious men were trained in the study of the sacred writings, employed in making copies of them, and prepared for the diffusion and defence of religious truth throughout the land. Under the care of this distinguished prophet, there can be no doubt that a complete collection of all the sacred writings in the kingdom would be made, and the canon completed up till that period. That David was inspired, and that he added to the canon, admits of no dispute. The same may be said of Solomon.

Further, a careful perusal of Scripture will show that from the time of Samuel, David, and Solomon, till the time of Malachi, there occurs no absolute break or interval during which there was no prophet. In some portions of that long period there are no directly *predictive writings*; but in every special juncture there stands forth a prophet sent by God to meet the necessities of that juncture. And let it be kept in mind, that the "schools of the prophets" were still regularly

maintained, and had become almost a national institute for the maintenance of sacred literature. The records of the nation would continue to be written carefully by them, not as national historiographers might have written them, in a merely secular spirit; but in a sacred spirit, for sacred purposes, and as the spirit of prophecy directed them. We find frequent references to what we may regard as the secular histories of the nation; not because the prophetic compilers of the sacred histories needed to appeal to *their* authority to confirm *their own*, but because an opponent, or a disputer, may often be best silenced or confuted by referring him to his own admitted authorities. We regard the portions called the books of Kings and the books of Chronicles as the compilations selected by the schools of the prophets, and preserved in these depositories of sacred writings,—not as the mere secular histories preserved in the public archives of the nation. It is quite possible, and even probable, that the public records would be destroyed by those invading conquerors who subverted the kingdom, while the special religious compilations which were kept in the schools of the prophets would be preserved among the other sacred writings, and thus survive as the only history of the kingdom. This would account for the peculiar aspect which they often present; as, for example, in those portions of public history in which the actions of Elijah and Elisha are recorded, which look much more like personal memoirs of these prophets, than histories of the reigns of those kings during which they lived. I am strongly persuaded, not only that this conjectural statement is essentially true, but also that it contains a principle, and suggests a view, which will be found to be of very extensive application, and of great value.

From the time of Jonah, throughout all the period in which both the greater prophets, as the chief four are called, and the minor, as the remaining twelve are called, continued to utter and write their prophecies, there is no interval, till the series terminates in Malachi, about 397 B.C. The addition of their writings to the canon rested, therefore, directly on the fact that they were prophets, and was never disputed by the Hebrew nation. We are warranted to conclude, then, even from this very brief outline, that no book was admitted into the Old Testament canon, except upon the authority of a prophet, either because it contained the predictions which God had

inspired him to utter, or because it contained such narratives as God had employed him to compile and preserve. *Prophetic authority* is the principle upon which rests the *Hebrew canon*.

It was customary for the Hebrews to divide their Scriptures, or sacred writings, into three divisions, termed the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa,—or, as expressed by our Lord, “the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms,”—the word Psalms being equivalent to the word Hagiographa. Josephus mentions the same division, as do all Jewish writers, who unanimously ascribe this arrangement to Ezra, after the Babylonish captivity. When these general terms are used, and not further explained, a difficulty may seem to arise, which may be thus stated: Are we sure that these three divisions contain *all* the books which we receive as composing the Hebrew canon? On this point the Jewish historian Josephus very providentially furnishes us with the very information we require. In his book against Apion, he states that the Hebrew sacred writings amount to just “twenty-two, which are justly believed to be of divine authority.” These he specifies as the five books of Moses, thirteen written by the prophets, who were the successors of Moses, ending at the reign of Artaxerxes, that is, with Malachi, and including the twelve minor prophets in one book. The remaining four books, he says, “contain hymns to God, and precepts for the regulation of human life.” These four are Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The canon existing in the time of Josephus is therefore the same which we now possess.

The argument in defence of the Hebrew canon might be stated in this form: From the very first, in the time of Moses, prophetic authority formed the sole principle on which the canon rested,—the only reason for the admission of successive writings into the canon. That principle can be traced in unbroken succession throughout the entire period of Hebrew history, till the time of Malachi, Nehemiah, and Ezra. By the latter of these prophetic men, divinely enlightened and guided for and in the task, all the previous sacred writings were collected and arranged,—in some instances a sentence or two added to complete the narrative,—and the whole collected into three books, or one book in three divisions; that these three divisions were not arranged on any strictly historical or chronological plan, so as to present a continuous history or public record, but in

accordance with the apparent nature of their contents, so that they might best promote the high ends of religious instruction, and be taught to all the nation by means of the system of the synagogue, then instituted. Thenceforward this arrangement continued unchanged; and as no new prophet arose, the canon remained as at that time settled. It was referred to by our Lord, according to this well-known division. But more, while He often censured them (the Jews) severely for many faults, and for none more severely than for their traditions, by means of which they overlaid, obscured, or misinterpreted the Scriptures, "making them of none effect by their traditions," He never in one instance accuses them of having vitiated the canon, either by leaving out any inspired book, or by inserting any writing that was not inspired. This is a peculiarly valuable testimony to the integrity of the Old Testament canon, as it existed in the days of Christ.

Further, in the writings of the apostles, the appeals to the sacred Scriptures of the Hebrews are very frequent and very full, especially by the Apostle Paul, who was thoroughly conversant with these Scriptures; and these quotations and references are so frequent, that there is scarcely a book in the Old Testament which is not in some degree cited in the New Testament. This is testimony to the integrity of the Hebrew canon till about the period of the destruction of Jerusalem. Josephus lived at the time of that terrific event, and was actually engaged in the wars ending in the entire subversion of the Jewish nation; and we have already seen that he proves the completeness of the Hebrew canon in his day. From that time forward, the Hebrew Scriptures were in the possession of both Jews and Christians, so that neither of these parties could have vitiated them without being immediately detected by the other. We may add, that the Christians who were of Gentile origin—not Jewish converts—felt a deep interest in the subject of the Hebrew Scriptures; and regarding the Jews as necessarily the best authority to consult on the point, were in the habit of making journeys into Judea, for the purpose of obtaining information from some of the Jews who had been allowed still to remain in their own land. The most distinguished of these was Melito, bishop of Sardis, who travelled into Judea within less than a hundred years after the time of Josephus, and wrote a catalogue of the books composing the Hebrew canon, as he

found it in his day. This catalogue has been preserved by Eusebius, and is identical with that furnished by Josephus.

I might trace a succession of authorities relative to the Hebrew canon from that time forward, for several centuries, till it altogether ceased to be regarded as a matter admitting of any plausible dispute; as, for example, Origen, Athanasius, Cyril, Augustine, Jerome, Rufinus, by the Council of Laodicea, and by the Council of Carthage. But it cannot be necessary to prosecute the subject any further.

There is, however, one point connected with the Old Testament Scriptures which remains to be stated, and demands some attention. It was not much more than a century after the return of the Jews from Babylon, under the kind of favour and protection of Persia, when Alexander the Great conquered Persia, overran the greater part of the East, reduced Egypt to the condition of a province, founded Alexandria, and gave encouragement to the Jews to settle there, as a privileged colony. His example was followed by the Ptolemies; and the Jewish colony became both numerous and prosperous. But they lost in a great measure their native language, and became a Greek-speaking people, though retaining all their religious beliefs. It became necessary for them to obtain a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, for their religious use. Their desire to obtain such a translation agreed perfectly with the views of Ptolemy Philadelphus, who was a generous patron of literature, and wished to possess a Greek copy of the Hebrew Scriptures in the library which he was then engaged in forming at Alexandria. A translation of the entire Hebrew Scriptures, as they then existed, was executed about the year 277 B.C., known ever since by the name of the Septuagint. This translation was made after the close of the Hebrew canon by Malachi and Ezra, and long before the rise of Christianity. It occupies a position something like that of an umpire between two parties, either for the purpose of mutual reconciliation, or for the purpose of mutual check. It does in fact answer both purposes. The Septuagint was actually current in Judea when Christianity arose; and quotations are often made from it by the apostles, instead of making such translated quotations as they might require. If the Jews had even ventured to attempt excluding some of the predictions that most manifestly referred to Christ, the Septuagint would have furnished a very direct

and unprejudiced proof of their attempt. Nothing could be either introduced or excluded by either Jews or Christians without the certainty of immediate detection by means of the Septuagint.

But after Christianity had begun to be leavened with that dark and guileful spirit which ultimately developed itself into the Papal system, attempts began to be made to introduce spurious writings into the sacred Scriptures. Not only the Jews of Alexandria, but other Jews, had acquired the power and the habit of writing in the Greek language. Their writings bore the characteristics of Hebrew thoughts, although expressed in a different tongue, and assumed the appearance of short histories, symbolical predictions, and familiar narratives. They were never received into the Hebrew canon, nor regarded as Scripture by the Hebrew people. When the Septuagint was translated, these Hebraistic writings were not at first included, because they actually formed no part of the original translation. The Greek-speaking Christians, however, the greater part of whom were by this time ignorant of Hebrew, began to read these spurious writings; and as their own spiritual discernment was by this time becoming about as defective as their knowledge of Hebrew, they began to attach considerable value to these imitations, and to give them the designation *apocryphal*, by which they meant to indicate that these writings were of *doubtful authority*. Ere long these writings were incorporated with the Septuagint. In process of time, they were included in Latin translations; and ultimately received into the Bible, by the authority of the Council of Trent.

Let it be distinctly noticed, that the books called Apocrypha never were included in the Hebrew canon; were not written in the Hebrew language; were not included in the translation of the Septuagint till a considerable time after the Christian era; were introduced gradually in times of darkening ignorance and increasing defection; and were not universally received by even the corrupt Christianity of the dark ages, till the stern bigotry, fanaticism, and infatuation of the Council of Trent gave the dread stamp of irrecoverable apostasy to Rome,—irrecoverable, because her impiously arrogant claim of infallibility renders her reformation necessarily impossible. At the commencement of the Christian dispensation, the Christian church unanimously and univer-

sally received the Hebrew canon, and followed its example in the formation of its own canon, as we shall soon have occasion to show. At a subsequent period, when evil principles and influences began to prevail, the church began to adopt the books called Apocrypha, which the Hebrew church had never sanctioned. As corruption increased, more of these books were received, till the whole had obtained at least the currency of common use. Still there were men of so much spirituality of mind as to recoil almost instinctively from apocryphal fiction, and others whose learning and sound judgment enabled them to perceive the fallacies used by those who advocated the use of these spurious writings, and who consequently continued to reject them. Meanwhile, the darkness increasing, and the corruption of the Romish system becoming more and more intense, *the Bible* not only became almost unknown, but its use was prohibited; and the false principles which Rome was now openly avowing, having some countenance in the apocryphal books, Rome was induced to place the Apocrypha in the canon, that she might reciprocally obtain from the authority which she had given, sanction to the errors which she had adopted.

It deserves to be remarked also, that both the recent invention of printing, and the translations of the Bible begun by the Reformers, and in rapid progress and extensive diffusion everywhere, were combining to render the perversions of Rome so manifest, that she was constrained either to adopt some measure of reform, or to take some strong ground on which to defend her conduct. It would not do merely to claim *authority*, when the opposing authority of Scripture could be brought against it; or to plead human tradition, against which also the direct statements of the Bible could be argued. But by declaring the Apocrypha to be canonical, the corrupt Papal system seemed to obtain the support of canonical authority for all its special corruptions. From the Apocrypha it could obtain countenance to such errors as the following: the unscriptural doctrine of purgatory, of prayers for the dead, of the mediatorial intervention of angels; together with a multitude of falsehoods, fables, self-contradictions, and contradictions both of Scripture statements and of well-known history. Such, as may very easily be proved, was the tissue of errors which Rome ventured to elevate into the same rank with

Scripture, that it might serve in some degree to conceal or countenance her own errors. It has only rendered her apostasy and her wickedness the more glaringly apparent.

With regard to the Apocrypha itself, there is one idea which I wish to suggest, but cannot prosecute, as not legitimately within my province. The books of the Apocrypha were all written after the return of the Jews from Babylon, and by men who had not the aid of the Holy Spirit in what they wrote. From them, therefore, we may learn what effect the long residence of the Jews in that country had upon the common Hebrew mind. It is quite easy to trace the influence of what we may term Zoroastrian doctrine and fable in the apocryphal writers, as also the prevalence of mystical thought, distorted and extravagant fable, deceit, and treachery, not only recorded but approved and commended, and various other indications that the Hebrew mind was becoming degraded and assimilated to the maxims and ways of the world. What was subsequently called Gnosticism, was then beginning to pervade the East, as it did still more powerfully and extensively at and after the Christian era, entering even into the very bosom of the church, and contributing largely to the growth of those ascetic and mystic elements which tended so much to produce monasticism, and to lead to the entire Papal system. It was not perhaps strange, when thus viewed, that the fully developed Papal system should in turn canonize its apocryphal ancestress. We would recommend the careful study of the Apocrypha from this point of view, and by the aid of this idea, as fitted to cast much and peculiar light on the state of the Hebrew and the oriental mind, during two or three centuries before the Christian era, and at that time; and also, on the early Christian church, during the first three or four centuries, preparing for, introducing, and producing what ultimately became the predicted Antichrist.

Even from this very brief outline of the arguments that may be used in defence of the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, which it would have been much more easy to have given at greater length, I trust you will see, that it is not in any degree a matter of obscurity or doubt, but that it rests upon a well-defined and firm foundation of sound and clear principle, and can be proved by unanswerable arguments. Just as the historical veracity of the Bible, which is beyond question,

gives value to every other argument in its defence; so the canonical authority of the Bible, which is also fully and irrefragably established, gives still increased value to all its doctrinal statements, and furnishes a powerful vantage ground from which to advance in proof of the gospel narrative and dispensation.

SEC. II. CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The attempt to ascertain the canon of the New Testament cannot be regarded as a matter of less importance to Christians, than it was to Jews to ascertain the character of the Hebrew Scriptures. The two sacred records form the inseparably connected first and second parts of the one revelation given by God to man. They mutually supplement each other in such a manner, that neither is complete without the other. The Mosaic dispensation is the typical and prophetic prefiguration of the gospel: the gospel dispensation is the fulfilment and realization of the law, and the prophets, and the Psalms: the same spirit and principles pervade both.

We commence our inquiry respecting the canon of the sacred Scriptures of the gospel, with the advantage of having already ascertained some points relative to the subject in our inquiry concerning the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures. Already have we learned that *inspiration* was the indispensable element in the reception of any writing into the *Old Testament canon*; and that the presence of this element in the writing required to be *attested by a prophet*. We may begin, therefore, with the same idea in its corresponding relation, holding that *inspiration* is the essentially indispensable element for securing the reception of any writing into the *New Testament canon*, and that the presence of this element in the writing required to be *attested by an apostle*. This inference,—for we shall call it only an inference at present,—proceeds on the principle of the perfect harmony subsisting between the two divisions of the one sacred volume, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Not a little, however, is gained for our investigation, even by the inference; for it enables us to perceive clearly the probable ground on which the early Christians proceeded in forming the canon. They could not but follow the example of the ancient Hebrew church. Now the Hebrew church had never needed

to form, and never pretended to form, its own canon. It had but to perceive the grand fact of inspiration—a fact rendered commandingly manifest by means of miracles and prophecy; and then the writings of this divinely commissioned and attested messenger of God were received into the canon on their own, or, rather, *his own, authority*. Without this divine attestation they could not have been received; for the church could not confer a divine character on anything which was not inherently divine. Nor did the ancient Hebrew church ever make any such attempt.

In like manner the early Christian church could not but desire that its own special divine revelations should be committed to writing, as had been done in the case of their forefathers; could not but expect it, in consequence of Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit to bring all things to their remembrance; and could not but look to the apostles and personal disciples of Jesus, as those by whom such sacred writings would be produced. And when on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was actually given, and that in such a manner as to convince thousands; when, further, the power of miracles was also manifested in connection with their teaching in the name of Jesus; and when they, with all their Hebrew convictions and inclinations awakened and called into the highest state of expectation, saw times and events so closely resembling those of the great prophetic periods existing around them, and were spiritually taught that these were the fulfilment of earlier prophecies,—it must be evident that they would expect from the apostles what had been formerly done by the prophets. The idea must have soon arisen that there would be gospel Scriptures, and that the apostles must be the only men by whom those Scriptures could be written. "And are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief stone of the corner," expresses unquestionably the state of mind of the early Christian church relative to their sacred Scriptures. Never did the notion arise in their minds that they could give canonical authority to any writings not previously canonical. Their only duty in the matter was to ascertain that any given writings were actually those of an apostle, and on that ground receive them into the canon.

The mere statement of this view will be almost enough to carry conviction to every intelligent and candid mind; and it

will be felt at once, that it relieves the subject from many an embarrassing inquiry. If we were to suppose that a considerable number of memoir-like narratives of our Lord's life and ministry on earth, and a still greater number of epistles, written by a great variety of holy men, were all collected together, and a great council of the church called to deliberate *how many* and *which* of all these should be selected, canonized, and made the Scriptures of the New Testament, we would of necessity become aware of the extreme, the insurmountable difficulty of the inquiry. Yet something like this is the theory held by the Romanists; and even Protestants may be found who seem either to have no definite idea of the matter at all, or to be almost ready to adopt the Papal theory. They will express their admiration of the very clear views which the early church must have had of spiritual things, enabling them to distinguish the true and inspired gospels and epistles from so many spurious ones as then abounded. The truth is, they had no such task to undertake; nor did they imagine they had. Their direct expectation must have been, that since apostles held the same relation to the Christian church which prophets had held to the Hebrew, and since Christ had promised to them specially the gift of the Holy Spirit, the writings of the inspired apostles would be the Scriptures of Christianity; and the only topic of inquiry, in any case, would be, *Whether the writings, regarding which any question was raised, were those of an apostle or not?* Taking this view of the subject, which we are convinced is the true one, we do not regard the questions relative to the New Testament canon as nearly so intricate as they have commonly been represented; nor as depending, in the slightest degree, upon the authority or even the knowledge of the Church of Rome; and we can settle the question without her help.

As the sole question in the early church was one of evidence on a plain and intelligible topic, so it is with us. *They* had to ascertain, in any instance, whether the treatise before them had been written by an apostle or not; if it had, it was of course received into the canon in its own right, that is, *on the authority of the apostle*. It did not *become canonical* by being admitted; but it was ascertained to *be canonical, because written by an apostle, and therefore admitted*. The only kind of evidence required was *proof of its authorship*. Suppose it the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians. Let the elders of Ephesus

give their testimony:—"Did the Apostle Paul spend some time in your city? He did. Were you sufficiently acquainted with him, so as to have had opportunities of knowing his handwriting? We were. After he left you, did you receive a letter purporting to be from him? And had you any means of knowing whether it were genuine? We did receive such a letter from him, brought to us by Tychicus, a trustworthy messenger; and a portion of it at the close was written with Paul's own hand, with which we are perfectly acquainted, which he added for the very purpose of authenticating the letter, as is his custom. Is this the foresaid letter? It is; and *there* are several just and correct copies of it, which we have compared with the original, and found to be perfectly accurate. Enough; let the original be carefully preserved, and let additional copies be made and circulated among the churches, and added to their sacred writings." There is not surely anything very difficult, recondite, or mysterious in all this; and such an investigation would insure the universal reception of the epistle. Nay, it would not require any such investigation; it would require only the transmission of the copy from church to church, accompanied with the attestation of the brethren at Ephesus, without the necessity of the original, and a formal production of evidence in proof of its genuineness.

The evidence which we require is closely similar. It has been thus stated by a learned man: "That every book is genuine which was esteemed genuine by those who lived nearest to the time when it was written, and by the ages following in a continued series." They, the contemporaries of the writer, had obtained satisfactory evidence. The next age continued to hold it, and no contrary evidence appeared to cast discredit or doubt on it. Having been transmitted to us with this unshaken character, why should we hesitate to receive it also, and continue to regard it as genuine and authentic? We are perfectly entitled, nay, bound, to do so, unless some conclusive evidence can be produced to prove that it never ought to have been received.

A remark of some importance may be made here. The canon of the New Testament must necessarily have been of gradual growth; and it must all have come into existence at first in distinct portions of the church, and been received by those portions before it could have been received by the church

general, either in a general council, or in any other way. Each church to which an epistle was sent by an apostle would be in possession of that portion of the canon before any other church; and all others would receive it on the testimony of that church. The consent of all the rest could add nothing to the canonical authority which it possessed from the first moment of its existence, in the estimation of those who received it direct from the apostle. No general council, then, *could* form the canon, for the canon had been already formed in detail; and all that a general council could do, was to record the collected result of the information furnished by the churches. How absurd, then, as well as arrogant, are the pretensions of the Church of Rome, when she claims to have formed and preserved the canon! From Rome we received one epistle, and no more; from Corinth two; from Thessalonica two; and from Ephesus three, for the two to Timothy were preserved at that city, and authenticated by the testimony of the brethren residing there. Valuable copies of ancient manuscripts, no doubt, are preserved in Rome; but even though Rome had utterly perished by the invasions of Goths, Huns, and Vandals, not one gospel, epistle, line, or word of the New Testament Scriptures would have been lost. Copies of all these sacred writings existed over all the civilised world in the second century,—the Epistle to the Romans and all; and would have continued to be preserved throughout Christendom with equal certainty, even though Rome had ceased to exist, so utterly groundless are her pretensions. Even now we could authenticate the New Testament Scriptures without any reference to Rome whatever, entirely by means of manuscripts from Africa, from Asia, and from the east of Europe, especially the Byzantine records. Rome has preserved valuable manuscripts in her great library at the Vatican, men say, and in many monastic institutions, for which we ought to be grateful. We ought to be equally grateful to the dead Pharaohs for the valuable inscriptions and manuscripts preserved in their rock-hewn sepulchres, *equally* grateful, but *not more so*! Nothing do we owe to Rome—nothing whatever—with regard to Christianity. Instead of forming the canon, preserving and transmitting it to us, she early began to corrupt it by spurious additions, by traditions, and by false interpretations; then to prohibit its use to those whom she called “the laity,” but whom Scripture calls “kings and priests unto God;” and

still to the utmost of her power persecutes those who venture to possess and read the word of God as He commanded.

There has been a very great deal of both interesting and instructive literature produced on the subject of the New Testament canon; but I can touch only a few of its most prominent topics. In doing so, I shall not so much investigate any of them fully, as state briefly some of the results which my own researches have led me to entertain.

The Gospel according to Matthew has always been regarded as the earliest of the New Testament records. It was written by the apostle of that name, and its reception was never doubted. The most prevalent opinion is, that a violent persecution having arisen in Judea, the apostle resolved to flee to another country; and the early Christians becoming aware of his design, besought him to write, and leave behind him a narrative of what he had taught them concerning Jesus, that they might have it for the support of their faith in his absence. He complied, and wrote it in Hebrew, for the special use of Hebrew believers. But as the Hebrew language was but a limited medium for such a record, and the overthrow of Jerusalem and dispersion of the whole nation was at hand, it was translated into Greek, *most probably by himself*; so that the Greek copy which we now possess is actually as much an original as the first Hebrew copy itself was. The free idiomatic structure of the Greek language, the frequent use of *paranomasia*, and many other specialties, prove that the Gospel by Matthew in Greek is as truly an original as its being clearly the production of an original author could make it. That Hebrew copy either was lost in the overwhelming catastrophe of the nation, or was superseded by the Greek copy, and sunk into oblivion, unless it was a corrupt and mutilated copy of it which was afterwards known as the "Gospel of the Nazarenes," or the "Gospel of the Ebionites," as some authors are inclined to think. The characteristics of the Hebrew mind are throughout manifest in Matthew.

The Gospel according to *Mark* occupies the second place in the order of the canon, and is almost universally ascribed to *John* surnamed *Mark*, the nephew of Barnabas, and a very constant companion of Peter. Ancient authors frequently call *Mark* "the interpreter of Peter," though it is not very clear what special meaning they intended to convey by that term.

They also often call his gospel "the Gospel of Peter," as they call the gospel written by Luke "Paul's Gospel." The generally received opinion among them was, that Mark wrote either at the dictation of Peter, or according to Peter's preaching, setting down as much as he could remember, and submitting the whole to Peter's revision, before producing it as a gospel narrative. Some regarded it as an abridgment of Matthew; but it has both too many points peculiar to itself, and too much of that vivid and even picturesque distinctness which characterizes the narrative of an eye-witness, for us to admit that it could be an abridgment. No doubt was ever entertained as to the propriety of its admission into the canon; and as Mark was not an apostle, the anxiety manifested to secure for it the authority of Peter proves that the early church did actually make the *apostolicity* of any writing the *authority for its canonicity*. This fact confirms what we have already stated with regard to the principle on which the canon must have been formed. But we may add, that the principle, as we understand it, would admit the writings of both Mark and Luke into the canon, irrespective of the additional consideration that they were respectively the companions of Peter and Paul. The essence of the principle, as we understand it, is *the inspiration of the writer*, not the mere fact that he was a prophet or an apostle; and although the fact that he was a prophet or an apostle might be admitted as *evidence of his inspiration*, yet it was *the inspiration itself* that formed the essential element. Now both Mark and Luke were among the *seventy*, though not among the *twelve*; and no doubt they were among those on whom the Holy Spirit descended so fully on the day of Pentecost. They were therefore, beyond all question, *inspired men*; and the fact of their direct inspiration could not but be known to their companions and friends. Even the fact of their constantly accompanying the apostles and engaging in their apostolic work seems to prove that they were then known to possess similar gifts; and if in addition to those apostolic labours the Holy Spirit were pleased to employ them to produce *inspired writings*, the apostles themselves would readily have recognised the fact, and aided in giving countenance to their writings.

The Gospel according to Luke was also universally admitted from the first. Luke, as already stated, was a frequent companion

of Paul; and some term the gospel written by him "Paul's Gospel." But Luke asserts his own knowledge of what he relates; and he records events which could not have been *personally* known to Paul; as, for example, the narratives relating to the nativity of John the Baptist and of Jesus. Luke's writings have comparatively little of a Hebraistic cast, and seem especially adapted to Gentile Christians. All these three Gospels must have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem; and we shall probably err little, if we adopt the date of Matthew as eight years after the crucifixion, that of Mark not till about twenty years later, and that of Luke probably about the same time. A common opinion among the ancients was, that Mark wrote his Gospel at Rome, though some mention Alexandria. My own opinion certainly leans to Alexandria, though I cannot here discuss the question so as to give my reasons fully. It has also been supposed that Luke wrote his Gospel at Alexandria, or at Corinth, or some city of Asia. It was certainly written for the use of Gentile converts, and more probably in Asia, perhaps at Antioch, than at any other place. The Greek of Luke is more pure, composite, and classical in its style and structure than that of any other of the apostles and evangelists, even of Paul himself.

The Gospel according to John was written last of all the Gospels. There is no certainty with regard to its exact date, though it appears evident that it was written after the destruction of Jerusalem. A very prevalent opinion is, that it was written at Ephesus, in which the apostle had taken up his residence for a time, and that he had seen and approved the three other Gospels, but wrote his one chiefly with a view to the confutation of the heresies then beginning to arise, led by Cerinthus and the early Gnostics. This, at least, is evident, that the main design of John's Gospel is to manifest the absolute divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. No doubt was ever entertained that it was written by the Apostle John, known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved;" and its canonicity was never disputed.

The book called "The Acts of the Apostles" has always been attributed to the evangelist Luke; and no other difficulty has been felt regarding it than that which arises from the fact that Luke was not strictly an apostle. There can be no doubt that the writer of this book was generally a fellow-traveller with

Paul, and that he accompanied that apostle on the journey to Rome, and was an eye-witness of what he records. The value of this book, as containing a true account of the early progress of the gospel, is very great; and its value, as confirming many incidental statements in the epistles, has been very strikingly shown by Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, which cannot be too carefully studied.

From a very early period the church received the epistles of Paul as New Testament Scriptures. The Apostle Peter terms them "Scriptures," and classes them with the "other Scriptures;" which not only shows that the church Christian had adopted the designation given to their sacred writings by the church Hebrew, but also, that even in the days of the apostles the canon had begun to be formed, and was receiving their sanction. It may be added, that as there is reason to believe that the Gospels written by both Mark and Luke were in existence and known before the death of these apostles, so we may believe that they were approved by them, and perhaps that Paul even alludes to Luke's Gospel, and to Luke himself with reference to it.

Some of the ancient writers ascribe fourteen epistles to Paul, which is the number that we still possess. Others omit the Epistle to the Hebrews, and regard its authorship doubtful, and consequently its right to a place in the canon also doubtful. This is, indeed, still a point under controversy, among learned men, writers on the canon, and writers of what they term *introduction*. Again I venture to state my own opinion, not rashly formed, and adhered to still, not without having read and studied the subject carefully. That opinion is, that the Epistle to the Hebrews is a genuine production of the Apostle Paul, although, with the intensely refined delicacy which characterized him, he refrained from writing his own name in any part of it, knowing the bitter hostility with which he was regarded by many of his own countrymen, and desirous to avoid exciting their prejudices, while seeking to promote their welfare.

Doubts were for a considerable time entertained regarding the propriety of admitting into the canon, the second Epistle of Peter, and the Epistle of Jude; but they also were finally admitted. While some received the book of Revelation from the first, a considerable number of churches hesitated, chiefly, however, because of its mysterious character. These doubts

passed away; and its right to be admitted became universally allowed. The date of its composition has not yet ceased to be made a question by some authors. This, however, arises chiefly out of their respective theories of apocalyptic interpretation. One class regard it as having been written during the persecution in the time of Nero; another in that of Domitian. The voice of antiquity appears decisive on the point, arguing almost unanimously to ascribe it to the date of Domitian, near the close of the first century. In our opinion there can be no reasonable doubt that this is the true date; and may mention one of the arguments used in support of the date of Nero, were it only to show how strangely learned men will reason, when they are bent on supporting a favourite hypothesis. The Apocalypse, say they, is much more full of Hebraisms than John's Gospel; therefore it must have been written before he had acquired much skill in Greek; therefore at the earlier date. The Apocalypse, we reply, is written entirely in accordance with the style, the imagery, the symbolism of the Old Testament, as if the very thoughts and visions of Ezekiel were before the apostle's mind. Ought we not, therefore, to expect that it would have throughout the thought, the imagery, the forms, the style, the idiom, and the very air and aspect of its Hebraistic mould, so far as the Greek language could be brought to adopt them? Even the more perfectly that the author could command the Greek language, the more completely would he give it the aspect of its true archaic and Aramæan original, the thoughts and sentiments of which he designed it to express. For this reason alone, though there are many others, we would unhesitatingly adopt the date of Domitian. We may add, for the sake of introducing a more simple and pleasing course of thought, that when we think of the Apostle John, as now nearly a hundred years of age,—all his early relatives, companions, and friends long in their graves, himself reduced to comparative inactivity through the mere weakness of his bodily frame, but all his mental and moral faculties still in undiminished energy,—we must perceive that his mind would be always engaged with the one or the other of two topics—either looking forward and upward to that heaven in which he hoped soon to rejoin his beloved Lord and Master, or backward with tender and brooding fondness to the scenes and the times of his youth. While thus engaged, his whole being would be poured afresh into its native

Hebrew channels of thought, and hope, and emotion, and memory, and expression, till, if he should even dream and murmur in his dreams, these murmurs would be Hebrew. If, then, God gave him a Hebraistic vision to see and to record, the language into which it would most naturally cast itself would bear at the very least a strongly Hebraistic mould. And this seems to me to be the state of mind in which John was when he beheld these visions.

I would not assert this; I would not rely much on it as argument: but I may venture to say, that to me it seems a far finer and truer criticism than the most of those which are proclaimed with such confidence from the very grave and dignified oracles of the "higher criticisms" of Germany.

I shall not further prosecute the subject of the New Testament canon; but merely mention a few well-ascertained dates and lists of the books, as these were recorded by writers in the early ages of the church. The earliest catalogue of the books of the New Testament is by Origen, the most extensively learned man of his day, who had bestowed much time and pains in the endeavour to ascertain all that was known about them. In this catalogue he enumerates the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, fourteen Epistles of Paul, two of Peter, three of John, and the book of Revelation. This includes all the present canon, except the Epistles of James and Jude; and these must have been omitted by accident, for in other parts of his writings he mentions them as part of the canon. Further, while Origen furnishes us with so complete a catalogue of the books now in the canon, he inserts no others; which proves that in his time the canon was abundantly settled among all competently well-informed persons; and that the distinction between inspired writings and human compositions was as clearly marked as at any subsequent period. Origen lived and flourished about one hundred years after the Apostle John.

An ancient fragment of the second century gives a nearly equally complete catalogue of the canonical books of the New Testament, rejecting at the same time by name, some spurious writings which had begun to creep into circulation under feigned names. Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, both gives Origen's catalogue, and one of his own, in which he names every book which we have now in the canon, and no others, mentioning

also that doubts were entertained by some concerning James, 2d Peter, 3d John, and the Revelation, but thinks they should be received. Athanasius concurs ; so does Cyril, omitting only the Revelation. Then followed the Council of Laodicea (350), then Epiphanius, then Nazianzen, then Philastrius, then Jerome, who translated the whole Bible into Latin, now known as the Vulgate. The catalogue and translation of Jerome is identical with the present canon. No additional authorities need be mentioned, as by that time the whole canon of the New Testament was universally received.

CHAPTER II.

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.



HERE is no subject to which the apologetic or defensive theology of our day is imperatively required to devote full attention more than to that of *inspiration*.

The very meaning of the term requires to be defined anew, with the most exact discrimination, if we really wish and expect to arrive at any clear and definite idea of the meaning which we intend to convey and to hold. A short preliminary statement may help to place the subject distinctly before us.

SEC. I. STATEMENT OF SUBJECT—DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION.

In our remarks on the canon we were at some pains to show, that the canon rested on the basis of inspiration; that is, on the ascertained fact, that the books therein contained were written by prophets, or by apostles, respectively, or at least had the sanction of prophets and apostles in each instance. This we proved, as we believe; and from this it followed inevitably, that neither the Hebrew church nor the Christian church had any direct authority to exercise in the formation of the canon,—had anything else to do, in reality, but to receive it, when God was pleased to give it through inspired men. It was also proved, that this was actually the process through which inspired books were received into the canon; and that in each case it was done on the ground of plain and adequate evidence, sufficient to prove that the books proposed for admission were the genuine and authentic productions of the inspired men whose names they bore. This was enough for the early ages of the church.

But in process of time the unhallowed desire of supremacy entered into the Church of Rome; and it had to devise many a reason on which to rest some plausible pretext for such a

claim. One great difficulty which stood much in the way of its ambitious pretensions, was the Scripture record itself ; and as this could not be at once removed, it must be overlaid with tradition, which must be elevated to an authority equal to that of Scripture itself, and that authority must be placed in the keeping of Rome. It was then comparatively easy to prove, from tradition, that Peter had been appointed prince of the apostles, and ruler of the whole church, in the room of Christ ; that he had been bishop of Rome, and had held and exercised his primacy there ; and that equal power had been left by him to his successors in the bishopric of Rome. Rome was the sole custodier of all those marvellous traditions,—that “unwritten word of God,” as she presumed to call it,—by means of which all such assumptions could easily be proved. The only other step necessary to secure absolute supremacy, was the assumption of that daringly impious dogma, Papal infallibility. Having claimed possession of this actually blasphemous prerogative, and blinded Christendom having conceded it, the supremacy of Rome, as the infallible church, was complete.

Divine Providence, however, co-operating with divine grace, were working towards a different result. The art of printing was discovered ; copies of the Bible and of pious books began to be diffused ; Constantinople was taken by the Turks ; and sacred literature began to be rapidly cultivated in Europe. No sooner was the Bible liberated from its long confinement in Papal dungeons, than men began again to call in question the supremacy and infallibility of Rome. The Reformation arose, boldly asserting the sole supremacy and infallibility of the word of God—the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This was indeed a mighty and a glorious revolution ; and the human soul rejoiced in the true spiritual liberty thereby achieved and obtained. But the human mind is liable to swing aside from one extreme to another, like a pendulum. Many, in their strong antagonism to Rome’s boasted supremacy, proclaimed loudly, not only the supremacy of the Bible, but the power of each sincere soul when a believer, to perceive, by his own spiritual perceptions, the self-evidencing power of the Bible. Rome did not deny that the Bible was the word of God ; but asserted that it needed an interpreter, and that *she* was its only and authoritative interpreter. This the Reformers rightly and truly denied ; but, in doing so, asserted too strongly and too

exclusively, not only the *right* of each man to judge for himself, but the *ability* of each man to judge for himself. In some instances the result was very soon apparent, in the innumerable sects of mystical, enthusiastical, and fanatical separatists that sprang up, first in Germany, and some time afterwards in England.

This ill-omened brood of lawless sectarians gradually sank into silence. But while they were descending into oblivious quiescence, the Protestant churches were also sinking into torpor. The next form of evil that arose partook of the exactly converse nature of the last, and yet sprang from the misuse in another manner of the very same element. *Fanaticism* had, in its first form, claimed the special right of *believing what it pleased* in the Bible, and acting accordingly. This was subjecting the Bible to its own mode of interpretation, in one manner. *Now* men began to assume that they were able to distinguish what parts of the Bible were inspired, and what were only of human production. But still this was subjecting the Bible to man's own mode of interpretation. In the *first* instance, when the human mind was in the wild whirl of newly awakened vitality, it swung away madly into fanaticism. In the *second*, when it was in the cold collapse of spiritual lethargy, it swung as far away into rationalism. The aim and tendency in each case was, to place the word of God under the power of the human mind; or to subject the Bible to the supremacy of man's own judgment, so that he might believe or reject at pleasure. It must be observed, that all this was within the nominal church, and from that position it derived its dangerous power. The direct antagonism of the world, as such, has never been able greatly to affect the church. But when within the church there springs up a spirit obliquely hostile to Christian principles, the most pernicious consequences may follow. The rationalists of Germany were all nominally within the church, and they paralyzed it for a season. The men who in our own day are most active and influential in promulgating fallacious theories of inspiration, such as would deprive the Bible of all divine authority, and leave it entirely subject to man's own opinions, are within the church—some of them in influential positions, others influential as men of ability and eloquence, and all of them in positions which enable them to do more injury to the cause of Christianity than an open enemy could.

Let us now take up the subject more directly. The proper ground of the canon, as we have seen, was the principle of *inspiration*, as existing in prophets under the Old Testament, and apostles under the New Testament. What, then, do we understand that word *inspiration* to mean? When we employ it with anything like precision, we cannot mean less than *the method by which God communicates His mind intelligibly to man*. But this statement not only admits of—it requires—analysis. There must be in any such divine communication at least *two* elements: there must be the *objective* matter of the divine communication; and this we term *revelation*, meaning thereby something which God has communicated to man, which man could not of himself have ascertained. But suppose this new divine communication given—given supernaturally, being itself necessarily supernatural,—if it be intended for the general use and benefit of all mankind, and if it be God's design to convey it to them through the medium of the man to whom it was at first given, some method must be adopted to secure that he give it precisely as he received it. This will be equally necessary whether he speak it or write it; but as writing it may seem at once the most simple and the most secure, we may direct our attention chiefly to *revelation as written*. It will be at once evident to a very common degree of exact thought, that a man may receive a communication and understand it tolerably well—nay, say correctly,—and yet not be able to repeat it in such accurately chosen words as shall convey the very same information to any other person. In such a case, the design of the communication might be entirely frustrated; and if the person had to any considerable degree misunderstood it, the design might be reversed, and a false conception conveyed to others. There must therefore be some method taken, of securing that the person receiving the communication shall write it down with such accuracy and precision of language as shall give a true and correct presentation of it to others. This implies that some kind of spiritual influence is used by God in that man's mind, enabling him to give an exact, perfect, and complete statement of this revelation in writing. The method by which this result is secured is called *inspiration*.

It ought to be at all times clearly and distinctly understood, that when we speak in general terms of the inspired word of

God, we mean to include both of these conceptions in the one twofold idea. We include both a divine communication from God to man, given by supernatural agency—the agency of the Holy Spirit; and also that truth transferred with supernatural accuracy to human language, by the same supernatural agency—that of the Holy Spirit. This is the full and true idea of *inspiration*, such as we mean to express when we speak of the *inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*. It will be quite obvious to any clear thinker, that these two ideas are perfectly separate, both in thought and in fact,—could be thought of separately, and could exist separately. *Revelation* relates essentially to some divine truth residing in the mind of God, and then supernaturally communicated to the mind of some human being. We can conceive of it as having nothing further to do but to convey that truth to the mind of that man, for his own special benefit. In such a case there would be *revelation* without *inspiration*. On the other hand, *inspiration* relates to the internal and spiritual process by which the prophet or apostle was enabled, without failure or defect, to transfer the truth thus communicated to him by God to the written language, in which it might become available to others. The *inspiration* may even enable the prophet to express, with absolute truth and precision, the communication which he has received, while he does not himself fully understand its meaning, so that it actually is not yet in a full sense a revelation to him. But in such a case, when the prophet's own knowledge cannot aid him in conveying the communication, it is all the more necessary that the inspiration be complete and plenary. The very instances of revelation separate from inspiration, and of inspiration separate from full revelation, which we find in Scripture, few in number as they certainly are, ought to be regarded as actually intended to enable us to apprehend the true nature of the full and complete idea of the inspired Scriptures, revealed by God to men whom He had qualified by inspiration, both to receive the divine communication, and to convey it with divinely inspired certainty to other men.

It is of great importance that this distinction be clearly apprehended; for it will not be possible to meet and refute the sophistical cavils and bold assertions of the opponents of the true idea of inspiration, unless they be constrained to meet

that idea fairly, face to face. When we take the language of Scripture itself and say, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," or "All Scripture is divinely inspired," we are not uttering anything of a vague and unintelligible kind, as every one ought to know; for the idea of Scripture was perfectly familiar to the Hebrew mind. The very word Scripture was a marked word,—a *vox signata*, which carried its own universally known meaning with it, and could not be misunderstood. Yet some venture to say, that the expression should be rendered, "All inspired Scripture is profitable;" leaving us quite at liberty to find out what is inspired, and what is not inspired. How cold and foolish is this statement, given by Paul to his beloved disciple and friend Timothy, at the time when he was about to finish his own long and faithful course, if *that* be all that it means! Why, Timothy had known that from his youth, and does not need to be told it now. It would either be an insult to Timothy to tell him gravely such a commonplace truism; or a proof that Paul's own mind was giving way, and that he was fast sinking into drivelling dotage. Yet many of our great critics—men of prodigious acquaintance with the "*higher criticism*"—mighty philologists, who live on syllables,—assure us solemnly that this is the meaning. Wonderful! "Hear now, would heart of man but think it? There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark but he's an arrant knave! There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave to tell us that!" Listen to your spiritual father, son Timothy. It is the last message I may send you!—What is it? Be well assured I shall treasure it up in my heart and mind.—It is this: All inspired Scripture is profitable!—Really! Why, both my mother and my grandmother taught me that long ago. I fear you trifle with me. What is it you mean to teach me, as a parting spiritual bequest?—Not, certainly, that cold truism, as you have rightly supposed. But I do mean to teach you this, that as the old covenant had its divinely inspired Scripture, written by prophets, profitable in all these various ways; so the new covenant has, and shall have, its divinely inspired Scriptures, written by apostles, and is also profitable in all the same diversity of ways. And further, I mean to teach you, that this very epistle to *you* forms part of these divinely inspired Scriptures, and must be permanently preserved and obeyed.

We cannot but think that this latter view and explanation, as intended to raise New Testament Scripture to a level with the universally recognised position of Old Testament Scripture, is immeasurably more in accordance with the relative characters, conditions, and circumstances of Paul and Timothy, than is the poor, jejune, and unmeaning truism, which our great verbal critics bring forward with such smirking self-complacency. And we venture boldly to state, as an axiom of Scripture criticism, that none but the man who can to some extent enter into the apostle's mind, and to that extent can even think his thoughts, can correctly understand and interpret the writings of an apostle. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, not otherwise.

But the very statement of this important axiom brings us into contact with a view which requires to be distinctly stated and understood. There is a sense in which every converted man becomes spiritually enlightened, and receives such a measure of spiritual discernment, that he can now understand Scripture in a very different manner from what he ever did before. Scripture itself uses very strong language in speaking of this converted and regenerated state. The man becomes "a new creature;" he is "born of the Spirit;" he becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit; he is taught of God, and knows all spiritual truth. These expressions are what theologians are accustomed to regard as the saving and ordinary gifts of the Spirit,—extraordinary also to this extent, and in this sense, that they are connected with the spiritual change which secures salvation. But they are not regarded as at all identical with inspiration, nor have they any connection with revelation. There is a close and a very interesting and instructive analogy between these states of mind, and it can be illustrated in many ways; but it is only an analogy.

Many a man, in attempting to teach others, has felt himself completely paralyzed by discovering that his pupil was destitute of the requisite mental faculty. Suppose it be into the arduous region of the higher mathematics that he wishes to introduce his pupil: when he finds that there is an absolute want of *that* precise element in intellectual power which takes cognisance of such matters, he may at once abandon the task, for he cannot give intellect. Gladly would he think *with*, and even largely *for*, his pupil; but he finds that his pupil cannot

think with him, and he relinquishes the hopeless enterprise. He may discover that there is some other mental element in which his pupil is actually strong, and he may prosecute *that* branch of instruction; but he need not waste his strength on the torpid or dead element. Or it may be the recondite and subtle thinking of metaphysics which he wishes to prosecute; and he may find that his pupil cannot even obtain a glimmer into the dim cloud-land of these ethereal regions. To the unfortunate pupil the whole appears to be utterly and hopelessly unintelligible; and he begs to be permitted to leave off a kind of study, which is to him enveloped in the gloom of impenetrable darkness. But he may actually be qualified to become a mathematician, or a musician, or a poet, though he cannot understand metaphysics.

Take another illustration more directly to the purpose. Suppose a religious man, a father, who feels the deep importance of training up his child in the way he should go. He bestows all care and pains, all kindly care and affectionate pains, in the endeavour to render his children well acquainted with the sacred Scriptures; he takes special care that they shall keep the Sabbath-day; and he regularly bestows a part of the evening of that holy day in teaching them religious truth. Has he succeeded in making them truly religious? Have they become all personally pious beneath his pious care? Alas! alas! they may pay some respect to their father's wish, and submit to the restraints which he imposes, and perform the duties which he requires; but all the while he may be most painfully conscious that theirs is still the carnal mind, full of enmity against God. They are still unconverted; and he cannot convert them. He can mould them by means of outward observances; but he cannot reach their souls. They are his children—the fallen children of a fallen parent; and he cannot make them the “children of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” Most willingly would he impart to their hearts that love of God which fills his own; but it is God alone who can create a new heart and renew a right spirit within them.

Now what does all this teach or illustrate? This, certainly, that there must be a spiritual change wrought in every human being by the Holy Spirit, before any man can become a Christian. But does it follow, must it follow, that this change is inspiration? There is in every natural man an alienation

from God, to use the mildest term. God has given a revelation of His real character and will; and this revelation is contained in the inspired Scriptures. Any man may read that recorded revelation; but he will not understand it, so long as he is destitute of the spiritual faculty, by which alone it can be understood. Parents and teachers cannot give this spiritual faculty, any more than they could give a new intellectual element to a child's mind. But if you *could* give a mathematical element to a youth's mind, you would not have thereby given him *mathematics*. The whole region of known mathematics would now lie open to him to be acquired; but it would need a continuous course of mathematical study to enable him to make the acquisition. In like manner, using the illustration by analogy, when the Holy Spirit enters into the soul of a man, and converts him, bestows upon him that spiritual faculty of which he was previously destitute, the whole inspired Scriptures lie open before him, and he can peruse them even with a *kind* of intelligence which is absolutely new to him. But he is not inspired. Neither new truths are communicated to him by revelation, nor is he made the medium for conveying new truths to others by inspiration. A very great and a very gracious work has been wrought in his mind, by the imparting to him of new life and enlightenment; but, so far from inspiring him, it only enables him to *understand inspiration*. It is neither revelation nor inspiration; but it so opens, expands, elevates, and enlightens his mind, that while he reads the inspired Scriptures, he feels the power of the spiritual revelation of the Son of God.

I trust this is perfectly intelligible. I am sure it must to every one who has been taught of the Spirit, and who has in him the same mind which was also in Christ, but who would shrink with instinctive and immediate recoil from the bare suggestion that his possession of these precious spiritual gifts implied *inspiration*. It appears to me, however, by no means an improbable thing that men who have never yet truly received in deep humility these spiritual gifts, but who have read in religious biographies something about religious-minded people, should be quite unable to see in what this spiritual-mindedness differs from inspiration. They can perceive that such people possess a knowledge of Scripture, and a perception of its deep spiritual meaning, which they do not themselves

possess; and they are quite ready to call this inspiration. But the people who possess this spiritual faculty and spiritual discernment do not in the least think themselves inspired. They bend on Scripture their opened but most reverential eye. They see in it at once God's revelation of pure, spiritual, objective truth to man; and the infallible transmission of that revelation by men inspired by the Holy Spirit for that very end. But they feel all the time like sentient atoms in the sun, receiving his brightness, and living thereby, but contributing no share of it.

There are two elements which it may be of some importance to notice, before quitting this topic. Men may, by cherishing the deep internal brooding and self-complacent spirit which produces mysticism, come to the absurd conclusion that they have received something like inspiration. Such people are always looking to or thinking of what they call their frames and feelings. Ere long they, by this process, cease to pay so much regard to what Scripture states, as to what they themselves feel. They cease almost to regard the facts of the gospel, by attending so closely to what they have come to regard as its inward spirit. This state of mind is very likely to arise in the case of those who are of what we may call a warm and sanguine temperament, on the one hand, or of a dark, contemplative, brooding, and melancholy temperament, on the other. According to the predominance of the one or the other element, they may become either mystics or fanatics. But in either case the cause is to be found mainly in their neglect of the inspired word of God, and their trust in their own frames and feelings.

It is always dangerous for a man to trust in his own internal impulses. For it is nearly impossible for any man to estimate the force of his own indwelling impulses and prejudices. They lie so near the very springs of thought and action in the mind and heart, that it is rarely safe to trust them. Every impulse should be brought at once to Scripture,—to the law and to the testimony,—to the analogy of faith; and if they will not stand this criterion, they should be resisted as not in harmony with the teaching of the inspired Scriptures. But this is an error into which ardent and impulsive people are very apt to fall; and it arises from the same error,—imagining that their deep spiritual feeling has given them something like

inspiration. No true impulse of the Spirit of God will ever lead a man to disregard the Bible, or to take unwarrantable liberties with it,—detaching a text in one place, and another in another, and putting his own meaning in them.

This, however, may be expected to follow, and has often followed, such a course of procedure. When the presumptuous conclusions that their mysticism or fanaticism had shown have been disappointed, the mind has sustained a fearful recoil, and rebounded into scepticism. They had no true scriptural warrant for their former opinion; yet they held it, as if it were inspired truth. It has disappointed them; and they now begin to doubt whether there be inspired truth at all. It would grieve certainly, but not surprise me, to find that in a few years not a few of those very persons who are at present making every effort to discredit true inspiration, and to raise the “religious consciousness,” or whatever else they may call it, of each individual believer to an elevation quite equal to inspiration, had abandoned Christianity altogether, and sunk into the dark abyss of absolute scepticism.

Let it be carefully observed, and solemnly pondered, that Scripture itself, while it claims inspiration, uses the most calm and grave language respecting it, but gives no direct explanation. The inspired man not only says, “The Lord spake to me,” but he says plainly and directly, “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue.” He does not attempt to explain the manner by which this was effected; but he has no hesitation in asserting the fact. And he does so with the most perfect simplicity, without boasting and without extravagance of assertion, as if merely stating a point which was too obvious to be denied or disputed. It had been well if mankind could have continued to receive the solemn statement with equal simplicity, and retained it with undisputing belief, that is, with a sincere simplicity of belief which accepted it on God’s authority, and retained it without any demand for an explanation of what, perhaps, cannot be explained to man. But “fools rush in where angels fear to tread:” men have determined to pry into the question; and their crude speculations have rendered it imperatively necessary for us to enter the same region, were it but to repel intruders, and preserve its sanctity.

SEC. II. INSPIRATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MAN.

The full idea of divine inspiration, as we have already shown, must of necessity include *two* essential elements: the *first*, the element of an *objective revelation external to man*, and communicated to him by God; the second, that of *subjective inspiration internal to man*, by means of which man is enabled to transmit, with infallible accuracy, to others the communication which God has vouchsafed to himself. That the full idea implies no less than this, a little consideration will prove. If man could attain to this knowledge by means of his own unaided powers, there is no reason to suppose that any revelation would ever have been granted. Reasoning from facts, we conclude that God does not reveal to man anything of an intellectual or scientific kind, which it is in the power of reason to discover; and, reasoning from analogy, we assume that God will not reveal any *moral truth* which the *moral faculty* can discover. It would have been of inestimable advantage to the early ages of the world, if mankind had possessed as much scientific knowledge as this present age enjoys; but it was always in the power of reason to make discoveries in science, therefore God did not bestow any revelation of the principles or results of science. The moral faculty has largely developed moral truth and duty; and instead of revealing moral truth and duty, Scripture always appeals to these principles as already known. What God in His goodness and mercy *reveals*, is what man *could not discover*. In any direct communication from God, therefore, we ought to expect it to contain some *objective revelation, external to man*, and *undiscoverable by man*,—some revelation of truths and principles residing so essentially in God Himself, that God Himself could alone have revealed them. Such are the great truths of the scriptural revelation,—such as THE TRINITY, the INCARNATION OF THE SON, the SUBSTITUTION AND ATONEMENT AND INTERCESSION BY HIM, the SANCTIFYING AGENCY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, the RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, and LIFE ETERNAL.

But the *second* element of the *full idea*—that of *subjective inspiration internal to man*—is also an indispensable condition of what we mean by *inspired Scripture*. This also may easily be rendered apparent. We can easily conceive a communica-

tion made from God to man, so that to the man who received it the meaning would be quite indubitable; but if he should attempt to convey that information to another man, he might find it utterly impossible to use words sufficiently clear and definite in which to give it adequate expression. It is not at all unusual to hear people say, "I understand it quite well, but I cannot express it rightly." If this can be said, and truly said, with regard to human thoughts, somewhat above the common perhaps, how much more must it be true, when a man attempts to express God's thoughts in human language! Would not any man be disposed to shrink from the delivery of a message of infinite importance from God to man, if he had no reason to hope for God's help in the delivery of the message, but must depend entirely on his own power of expression? In many instances, indeed, the prophets did shrink from the solemn and awful responsibility, till they were reassured by the divine promise, "I will be to thee a mouth and wisdom;"—both *language* and *knowledge* are in the promise. This is the *subjective inspiration internal to man*, and implying that the Holy Spirit exercises so much of His divine agency within the soul of the chosen messenger as to secure that he shall transmit, with perfect accuracy and infallible truth and certainty, the very message which God vouchsafed to give. If these were not so secured, there could be no certainty that the divine message could ever reach any other soul than that to which it was at first given. It might be so marred and warped, in the process of transmission, by the imperfection of the vehicle, that it would never come to another man as the word of God, but only as the word of fallible and erring man. And it must be evident that it is inconsistent with any idea we can form of the wisdom and goodness of God, to suppose that He would give a *revelation* intended for general use which should fail at the very moment when it came to be applied; that it should come unimpaired from heaven to earth, enter in spiritual purity and power into the soul of the appointed messenger, and then be uttered to other men in stammering confusion, stained by human error, and enfeebled by human weakness. We dare not ascribe such inconsistency to God.

It would lay us open to the charge of high presumption, were we to assume that we could succeed in explaining this profoundly mysterious subject, where so many have failed.

Yet by not seeking to explain what is in its own nature inexplicable,—by pointing out what is inexplicable in the subject, and why it is so, and by keeping our investigations strictly within the limits of what is accessible to the human mind,—we venture to hope that some light may be thrown, if not on the subject itself, yet on the dark discussions in which it has been involved.

What we seek to ascertain is, *the possibility that a supernatural revelation and inspiration can be given to man, in accordance both with the course of the divine procedure, and with the nature of man.* Even the mere statement of what the inquiry really is dispels much of the darkness that has been thrown around it; and can scarcely fail to suggest, that he must be a bold man who will venture to say that such a thing is necessarily impossible. Who shall presume to limit the Divine Being in His intercourse with the human spirit, and say what is possible or impossible to Him, without violence to the mind of man?

We commence our investigation by resuming, as we are entitled to do, a portion of what has already been proved. *Personality* has been already proved, both with regard to God, and with regard to man. It has been proved also, that the idea of *personality* implies and contains *moral will and consciousness.* Now the existence of this profound and essential consimilarity between God and man,—though in it man can but bear the *image* of which God is the *reality*,—renders a very profound and intimate intercourse between God and man possible. The idea of *personality* implies that *persons* can have *personal intercourse*; that is, intercourse in *moral will and consciousness.* Men have *personal intercourse* with each other, and *know* that they have, however difficult it may be to explain the process, so as to meet and answer all cavils.

Let us attempt to explain and illustrate this. Irrational animals have no *personality*; and our intercourse with them is so very limited that we can scarcely call it intercourse at all. We *use* them for our service, our pleasure, or our amusement; we teach them, through their faculty of memory, such habits as may increase their usefulness, or make them so much the more suitable for our amusement; but we cannot hold any *personal intercourse* with them. We cannot reason with them; we cannot interchange sentiments with them; we cannot enter into their *consciousness*, or enable them to enter into ours. There cannot be *personal intercourse* where there is *not mutual*

personality. It is very different in the case of man with man. We cannot come into contact with each other without at once perceiving that they and we have at least a very strong resemblance to each other in many respects; and the more intimate our acquaintance with each other becomes, the more do we become aware of this mutual resemblance. We perceive that other men have a *moral nature*, not only *resembling* our own, but ultimately we come to regard it as *identical* with our own in every respect. We go further: we perceive the same element everywhere in all other men, till we conclude that there is a *universal human morality*, constituting mankind a *great human unity*. Our inquiries and observations end not there. The identity of *will* next appears; and we learn to treat each other on something like the principle of *reciprocity*,—feeling quite certain that our fellow-creatures inevitably *will* and *wish* the same as we *will* and *wish*, and that we must either live in a state of perpetual warfare, or be prepared to make mutual concessions, so as to secure peace on the basis of recognised *mutual will*. Even a still closer identity than this can yet be discovered. When we mark attentively the conduct of our fellow-men, and look narrowly into our own consciousness, we are constrained to perceive that they, too, must possess a consciousness identical with ours; so that it is not only in *moral nature* and *will* that they are like ourselves, but in everything that we regard as combining to make up the sum of human nature. And now we feel that our intercourse with our fellow-men can be *universal* and *absolute*,—can be truly *personal*, embracing all the elements of *moral will and consciousness*.

In many instances this is manifested in a manner equally beautiful and wonderful. Mark two people, in the case of whom their mutual personality is peculiarly complete and congenial. The general expression of their countenances becomes almost identical. The same natural scenery of beauty or sublimity lights up their eyes with delight, or casts over them the same grave, earnest looks of solemnity and awe. The same scene of suffering and grief bids the tears of sympathy gush with equal readiness from the pitying eyes of each. The same fine or noble poem excites in their hearts and minds, at one and the same moment, the same elevating glow of generous and pure sentiment, or lofty and ennobling thoughts. Their personal intercourse is almost perfect, even when voiceless. Their

looks converse with each other; their very minds converse; their hearts can interpret, and even anticipate, each other's feelings. All this may spring spontaneously from native personal congeniality,—congeniality in moral will and consciousness, and in mental endowments. But it can also grow. It can be cultivated by the habit of intercourse, by the increasing facility with which the slightest indications of personal desire are understood, and by the increasing pleasure of endeavouring to gratify the beloved and honoured personal friend.

Does the cold sceptic ask how this can be? Does he dispute it? Does he deny it? He dares not; unless he is prepared to disclaim his participation in the finest elements and sympathies of our common humanity. It may well be that he cannot frame any such explanation of it as will quite answer or come within the rigid rules of *his* "logical understanding;" and he may, perhaps, venture to suggest that it is a very pleasing dream of the poetic imagination, but inconsistent with the stern realities of life. If so, he is to be pitied—greatly to be pitied; since his cold sceptical tendencies have cut him off from all that is tenderest, purest, noblest in human nature.

This deep sympathy of personal intercourse may be expected to be known most frequently and most completely in the domestic circle, where there is, or ought to be, a most entire reciprocity of mutual personal feelings and interests. But it exists also very strongly in the case of persons linked together by the tie of a community of pursuits and congeniality of inclinations. In such cases it is not unusual for men to have an almost intuitive conception of each other's very thoughts, feelings, and desires, as if they were animated by one and the same mind. "See how that noble fellow leads the fleet into action!" exclaimed Nelson, as he gazed on Collingwood, forcing his way into the French line under a press of sail. "What would Nelson give to be here!" exclaimed Collingwood, at the very same moment, as if the two heroic men were animated by only one spirit. Literary and scientific identities of thought have often appeared, and called forth from the higher order of minds—from men of true genius,—not envy, but mutual admiration and delight.

But the finest, the purest, and the highest of all personal intercourse,—of all mental, moral, and spiritual identity of feeling and desire,—arises from unity in religious faith and

love. This unity in religious faith and love produces also a more profound and comprehensive intuitive sympathy between the souls that it unites in its deep life-blending power than can be effected by any and every other mental element or affection. When the love of God in Christ shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit has become the ruling principle of any soul, it cannot but love every other soul in which the same principle reigns. But more than this: it acquires a new power of intuitively perceiving the existence of the same principle in other souls, and feels itself drawn to them by the kindred action of the same power that draws it to Christ. Intimations of spiritual life and love which the man of the world would not at all perceive, or, if he did, could not understand, are readily seen and fully understood by another spiritually minded man, and immediately attract his earnest attention, and knit him to his new-found Christian brother. In this there is nothing inconsistent with the human personality which we have been considering; but there is that personality elevated into a more than moral will and consciousness,—into a *spiritual consciousness*, identifying all true Christians with each other and with Christ.

It is *personal intercourse*, and can be felt and understood perfectly; but it would not be easy, perhaps not possible, to state and explain it in strict logical terminology. It is too finely and profoundly true to be cast in the rougher forms of the logical understanding; but it will be always intelligible to the inner consciousness of human personality. Mark, then, how it may be applied, in illustration, to the profound subject, in the investigation of which we are engaged. There may be a personal intercourse between the personality of man and the personality of God, to whatsoever extent God pleases. If one man can look into the eyes—those windows of the soul—of another man, and not only see what that other man means, but let that other man see what he means, when their respective personalities deeply and truly sympathize, can God not look directly into a man's soul, see what that man thinks and feels, and enable that man so far to know what God Himself thinks in the special matter for which God gave him that enlightening look? But that divine look may be intended not merely to enlighten the human personality, into which it has entered, and to arouse or produce a reflected light in that human soul itself;—it may have had a more important and momentous design and

errand; it may have been for the purpose of communicating a new idea to that human mind, previously dwelling in God's mind alone, and not known to any human mind. This, as we have already seen, may to some extent be done by one human person to another, not by any such power as that of absolutely imparting a new faculty, but by the exquisitely fine excitation of latent or weak faculties which one strong and earnest personality may convey to another. And as the human personality has for its deepest essence a moral nature absolutely identical in kind with the moral nature of God Himself—the very image of God,—so there must exist in man the possibility of being so enlightened and elevated by the personal intercourse which the Spirit of God may condescend to hold with his spirit, that he may receive a new moral idea without violence to his own deepest personality,—not only without violence to his own personality, but with the highest degree of elevating and refining gain to all the loftiest and best elements of his nature, and even to the enlargement of his moral freedom. For it must be evident to every reflecting mind, that *error* of any kind is *bondage* to a moral will, that all *sin* is *slavery*, and that it is the *truth* that *makes us free*. The communication, therefore, of a new moral idea to the human soul by the personal agency of the Divine Spirit within the profoundest personality of the human spirit, must actually convey to it increased moral freedom and dignity in its increased resemblance to God thereby acquired,—the increased brightness of the restored image of God.

Further, it may be God's design that the new moral and spiritual idea imparted to that soul is not to remain limited within that narrow sphere, but to be transmitted to others. The divine will is, that this man shall be not the *receiver* only, but also the *promulgator* of that new moral and spiritual truth, and that, too, in its integrity. Is this, then, impossible? Why should it be so, or be thought so? Let it be admitted that a man may have a true possession of an idea which he cannot adequately express, and even that he may obtain or acquire an idea without also obtaining the power of giving adequate expression,—it does not follow that the power of expression can neither be acquired nor even bestowed by the same agency that could convey an idea, though it may be by a different exercise of that agency. What the man, already divinely enabled to

receive a divine idea, still wants, and now specially wants, is the faculty of uttering that idea correctly, in such words as may convey it correctly and in its integrity to others. Can our previous illustrations help us to apprehend, not how that is done in the case of inspiration, but how it is possible, or may be fairly conceived of as possible, without violence to human personality? We may try.

The influence of one personal being upon another may be exercised, as we have already seen, without the least violence to that other, and even with positive increase to his mental and moral freedom, so far as the communication of moral ideas and thoughts is concerned. But though it is certainly true that men may think in symbols, and without the use of language, it is also true that men commonly think in language, and convey their thoughts in language, and acquire definiteness in thought in almost exact proportion as they acquire definiteness in language, and, on the other hand, definiteness in language as they acquire definiteness in thought. This every human person knows to be true of every other human person. If, then, a man wish to convey his thoughts accurately to another, he will be careful to express them accurately to that other; and if he wish them to be transmitted with unimpaired accuracy to a wider circle, he will take care that they be accurately expressed by the medium of transmission. And just in proportion as the thoughts are important, will he be careful that the words be accurate and precise in expression. But since personal intercourse and influence can freely elevate the power of thought, why should it be thought impossible for it also to elevate the power of expression? Nay, we know that it can and does. We know that habitual intercourse and conversation with a person of a refined and accurate style of expression will produce a measure of even unconscious resemblance to him in that quality—a congenial assimilation. Even the frequent reading of an author will produce the same effect, although there be no conscious desire to imitate or emulate his style. Most signally will any personality thus become assimilated to another when the gentle yet mighty principle of love is the bond, the very element, of this life-blending personal intercourse. But love—holy, spiritual, and divine love—is the element by means of which God holds intercourse with man, and man is admitted to hold intercourse with God; therefore in this intercourse

there may, or rather must, be produced an increasing tendency in the human soul to become assimilated in thought, in will, in moral ideas and principles, in life and conversation, in everything by which the human personality can manifest itself, to the divine personality, so far as the creature can be assimilated to the Creator,—the finite to the Infinite.

Yet further: as when, in the case of two human persons, their loving intimacy has produced a lovely and delightful assimilation, they cannot but become conscious of it, and in this mutual consciousness there must dwell the very life of mutual happiness,—so may this result, in its highest form, be produced by the spiritual intercourse which God vouchsafes to hold with man. While the human personal spirit, in all its moral will and consciousness, is experiencing that transforming assimilation whereby it is “changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord,” it cannot but become conscious of that blessed change, and in that consciousness already enjoy an earnest and foretaste of heaven. It may be said, that all this amounts to nothing more than an amplified illustration of the gracious illuminating influence which the Holy Spirit employs in the act of conversion and the work of progressive sanctification, but does not *explain inspiration*. Let it be remembered that I disclaimed the attempt to explain inspiration, and undertook only this much: to show how a very great amount of divine agency may be exercised in the very personal region of the human spirit without violence to its nature, even while transforming its inner being.

But now, try to conceive of a human being so far spiritually renewed by the Holy Spirit; and suppose that it should please God to reveal to the man so renewed and rendered a spiritually minded man, some direct spiritual truth, and commission him to proclaim it to others, promising to give him also the power of adequate and correct expression, so that he should be able to utter with infallible accuracy this infallible truth, would this amount to a violent invasion of this man’s personality? or could the man himself regard it in that light? The giving of that new spiritual truth would be *revelation*; the giving of the power of adequate and *infallibly adequate expression* would be *inspiration*; and a written statement of the whole, by the inspired man, would be a portion of *divinely inspired Scripture*. These latter facts of the case would be all supernatural, and generically dis-

tinct from the previous facts of conversion ; they would differ not only in *degree*, but in *kind*, from the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit, in convincing, converting, enlightening, and sanctifying the human soul. The ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit convey no absolutely new truths, and impart no absolutely new powers ; but the extraordinary operations of revelation and inspiration do convey truths absolutely new, and impart powers not previously possessed ; and the infallibly accurate record of these is *divinely inspired Scripture*. Yet although they are absolutely new, even to the converted soul,—for a soul may be converted so as to believe the earlier portion of a revelation before the entire of that revelation has been communicated to man,—they do not imply any violence to the true personality of that soul, any more than conversion itself did. And as in conversion the soul becomes conscious of enjoying spiritual intercourse personally with its personal God, the Father of spirits—loving, living, and free spiritual intercourse ; so in revelation and inspiration,—in the full idea, and very specially in the second element of it, inspiration,—there must be human consciousness, refined, elevated, spiritualized by that intercourse, and in that intercourse, but still an entire and true human consciousness. The inspired man, prophet, or apostle must know perfectly that he is inspired, and that the words which he is at that moment speaking or writing are not his own, but are the words of the living and true God. And every other inspired man must, in the spiritual consciousness of that spiritual discernment which God has given, be also able truly to discern the truth of those “spiritual things” which other spiritual men speak and write, as the Holy Spirit teaches and moves them,—thereby becoming a cloud of witnesses, divinely qualified to bear unimpeachable testimony to the infallible truth of the living and abiding word of God.

SEC. III. KIND OF EVIDENCE RELEVANT AND SUFFICIENT TO PROVE INSPIRATION.

The opinion which careful thought and investigation, and repeated examination of many a treatise on the subject, have unitedly led us to form concerning inspiration, amounts at least to this : *That true plenary inspiration characterizes the sacred Scriptures throughout.* In the preceding lecture our design was

to show, not only that full inspiration is possible, but that the idea of full inspiration, rightly understood, contained nothing inconsistent with human nature, or implying any violence to human nature, so as to destroy any of its proper characteristics. That it is *supernatural*, we readily admit; but not that it is *contranatural*. That in its full action it *infinitely transcends* what is simply natural to man, we both admit and affirm, because it is the Spirit of God working in man, both giving him knowledge that resides essentially in the mind and will of God, and enabling him to transmit that divine knowledge unimpaired to other men; but we do not admit that this implies the temporary annihilation, or even suspension, of what is properly natural to man during the period of inspiration, while we do very strongly assert, that nothing less than plenary inspiration was necessary, in order that the gracious design of God in the whole might not be frustrated, and become abortive at the moment when it was coming into contact with the mind of man, for the direct accomplishment of the end for which it had been sent. Why should there be any annihilation of what is natural to man? What is properly natural to man? Not *sin*, not *corruption*, not *deceit*, not *falsehood*, not *selfishness*, not *aversion from good*, not *proneness to evil*, not *enmity against God*. All these are instances and results of that violence done to *man's original nature*, which took place when Satan tempted our first parents to rebel against God. In *conversion*, the essence of that violence is removed, and a renewal of the proper and primitively natural is effected; but this, in conception, and by the very terms, is not in any just and true sense a violence done to human nature,—it is rather *a rescue of human nature from that ancient violence*. From the moment of conversion, the human soul regains, and continues to possess, the element of receptivity, as a German might term it; and whatever can enter congenially into that renovating element, may be most truly called *natural to the new nature*, though still supernatural, and even contranatural, to the fallen and sinful nature.

A *revelation* granted to a converted man, though supernatural, is not contranatural. *Inspiration*, or the power of transmitting that revelation with infallible accuracy, though also supernatural, is also not contranatural. Both united and in plenary action, though highly supernatural, are not in the very least contranatural, unnatural, or in violence to the new

spiritual nature ; but rather what the converted man's highest personality might almost venture to anticipate from the grace and favour of his personal God,—now also his Father in heaven,—through the Mediator, and by the Spirit. But it appears to us, that one reason why so many great philosophers and great critics, as they are esteemed—and small philosophers and small critics, which another class may be called—and men who are neither philosophers nor critics, except in their own estimation—misunderstand and misrepresent the doctrine of inspiration, is, because they almost invariably reason about human nature as if it were still in its primitive state of innocence—still unfallen and sinless. They construct their fine theories about human nature all on the hypothesis, that it still possesses all its new-created purity and truth ; and from a premiss so false, they cannot by any possibility draw anything but a false conclusion. To them *conversion* seems a violent interference with human nature ; whereas it is in reality only an *interference with sin*, and a *deliverance of enthralled and degraded nature*. Of course, arguing from the same false premiss, they must also conclude that *inspiration* is an overwhelming violence to human nature, reducing man to the condition of a machine, passive and unconscious under the power of the Holy Spirit ; whereas, in reality, it overwhelms only the wild machinery of sin, expels the possessing and impelling Satanic agency, and sets the human spirit free to hear the voice, and know the mind, and obey the commands, and speak the words of God. And as this fallacious process of reasoning from a defective premiss has become common, and been in a manner sanctioned by the example of men otherwise eminent, even good and pious Christian men and ministers, dazzled by shining names, have allowed themselves to adopt similar phraseology, using such absolutely unmeaning words as “mechanical” or “dynamical,” applied to “theories of inspiration.” But I reserve what I wish to say on such points till a more suitable opportunity.

The point on which I wish chiefly to dwell at present is this : to consider what kind of evidence may be regarded as *relevant* in proof, and *sufficient* to prove, the fact of inspiration. By *relevant in proof*, we mean evidence which bears such relation to the fact, that if the evidence be produced in adequate amount and distinctness, the fact must be admitted as proved. Let us,

then, first consider the special nature of the fact of inspiration itself. This will require us to attend strictly to the true scriptural meaning of the term ; for it has been one of the common artifices employed by the assailants of scriptural inspiration, to destroy all distinctiveness in its meaning. They apply the word *inspired* to almost everything, and every man, especially of mental eminence. In this sense they would readily call Paul an inspired man, but not more readily than Plato, or Newton, or Milton, or far inferior men : some of them even apply the word deliberately to irrational animals. All this is evidently done with a deceitful design to produce confusion in the mind of the plain and honest inquirer. He wants to know something about the inspiration of Scripture ; and he finds himself led into some vague talk about men of note in philosophy, and poetry, and history, and science, and war, and the fine arts ; and he becomes lost in a bewilderment of sophistical confusion. Such conduct is manifestly deceitful ; since every man knows that the term *inspiration*, as used with reference to Scripture, has long had a perfectly distinctive and special meaning. A man may oppose that distinctive meaning if he will, but let him do so distinctly and openly—not first try to involve the whole subject in obscurity and confusion, and then attempt to destroy it.

The Scriptures themselves must be the proper authority for determining the meaning of the term *scriptural inspiration*. Scripture usage, then, gives the designation *inspired* to those specially gifted men by whom God taught His chosen people, by whom He foretold the future, and in attestation of whose divine commission miracles were wrought. The divine, and therefore supernatural, *presence of the Holy Spirit* is the indispensable condition of inspiration, as the term is used in Scripture. “ Thus saith the Lord,” is the permanent and solemn form in which they announce their message ; or, “ The Lord spake unto me, saying,” or, “ The Spirit of God spake by me.” By these, or some equivalent modes of expression, inspired men declared the fact of their inspiration, and claimed the reverential attention of those to whom they had been sent to address the divine message. When we direct our attention, then, *first* to the fact that they openly declared themselves to be directly charged with a *message from God*—a moral, religious, spiritual message,—we become necessarily aware of

the claim, as avowedly made by them ; and when *next* we mark the accompanying fact, that with equal openness they give, as evidence of that fact, either the immediate manifestation of divine power in the working of a *miracle*, or the subsequent manifestation of divine power and present foreknowledge by the utterance of a *prediction* ; and when we duly combine these two elements, we become something like adequately aware of what Scripture inspiration means, and what kind of evidence is offered in proof of its reality. The inspired men of Scripture times offered to the men of their own age, their own contemporaries, the proof, by either *miracles* or *prophecy*, or both, that they had received their message direct from God, and that therefore it was entitled to be received as a divine revelation. Let it be remembered that we are not at present dealing with the subject-matter of the revelation, or revelation-objective, but adverting to the evidence of intercourse between God and man produced in proof of its reality by those who claimed that they had themselves enjoyed that intercourse. As we have already examined that evidence fully in the case of both miracles and prophecy in previous lectures, we need not repeat the examination here ; but may content ourselves with asserting that we have found that evidence to be clear and conclusive. In some of these recorded instances the evidence must have been even startlingly conclusive ; as when the miracle was wrought on the spot, and in a moment, or when a prediction to be fulfilled in a short period was made the ground of believing that a prediction relating to a remote period would also be fulfilled when its appointed time should have come. The prediction of early or immediate fulfilment gave, when uttered, a strong presumption of the prophet's inspiration, who had dared to peril his credit on the occurrence of an event which, though unknown and as yet future, was so near at hand ; and when that event took place, it would excite strong assurance of the still future and remote.

I have directed special attention to this point, because an attempt has been made by some whose learning is greater than their judgment, and whose hostility surpasses their courtesy, to cast ridicule on the production of Scripture testimony in support of Scripture inspiration, by calling it an illogical and fallacious assumption of the point to be proved, by calling in what they are pleased to term, "infallible witnesses to their

own infallibility." Let it be well observed, that inspired men appeal in the first instance directly to God, and receive His testimony either in the form of a miracle, or in that of a prediction. This is indeed calling in an infallible witness; but it is to bear testimony to the infallible truth which He communicated to those men by His Spirit, and commanded them to utter or write, on His authority; but it is not these men bearing testimony to themselves, as the sneer of the opponent is meant to insinuate. And yet these men were entitled to bear evidence in their own persons, directly and in the first instance, with regard to the fact that God had spoken to them, and given them a message to deliver to mankind in His name and on His authority. How else were other men to know that fact? The immediate fact of inspiration, when God communicates to any individual man the knowledge of His will, commanding him to declare it to other men, must be an *invisible miracle*, and known in that condition only to God and that human soul. But the man obeys the command, and proceeds to deliver the divine message; and in doing so, he must begin by stating his authority for uttering such a message,—he must begin by saying, "The Lord spake to me, the Lord sent me, the Lord is speaking by me: thus saith the Lord." Are we to assume at once that he is an impostor or a madman, because he makes such an assertion,—as some modern opponents do not hesitate to say? Shall we not act the much more calm and rational part in asking him what proof he has to produce that he has received such a commission? Suppose he should not have received authority to call for divine attestation in a miracle, as in the case of John the Baptist, still it must be possible that he is a man of such well-known truthfulness, honesty of purpose, and high moral integrity of character, that no man can doubt his sincerity, and that therefore all men listen to him respectfully. He proceeds with his message; and it soon appears that it has a predictive as well as a preceptive character. Like the ministry of John the Baptist, it may declare some great event close at hand, and may warn men to prepare for it, appealing in that warning to passages in earlier prophecy which had long been neglected or misunderstood, and are now on the point of receiving both explanation and fulfilment. While he speaks, men feel their hearts stirred, and their consciences enlightened, in an unwonted and very power-

ful manner; they may not choose but listen to his piercing words; and as they listen, they are convinced. Yet this man produced *at first* nothing but his own testimony to the fact of the message which he had received from God; and *next*, the concurrent testimony of the holy and inspired men by whom God spoke in other days.

But mark also the manner in which Christ met the demands and cavils of the Scribes and Pharisees, when they said, "Thou bearest record of thyself, thy record is not true." "Though I bear record of myself, my record is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." So far as this reply assumes the form of argument, it amounts to this: "I stand on my known character, and, to that extent, claim to have my own testimony received as part of my evidence; and before you can object to that, you must show some ground for suspicion against my credibility, which you cannot do;—which of you convicteth me of sin? And the Father that sent me—of whom ye say that He is your God,—He also beareth witness of me. There is a full compliance with the demands of your law in two trustworthy witnesses: my evidence is *relevant* and *sufficient*." In what has this argument any fallacy or inadequacy? Yet our scoffing opponent may say it is of the same character as the rest,—it is an individual assuming to be "an infallible witness to his own infallibility." Referring to the language of Nicodemus, it is a direct appeal to God, as having already given testimony in the miracles already wrought, in a manner to which they were accustomed to attach belief, on the recognised principle, "No man can do those miracles, except God be with him;" and it is an equally fearless appeal to His own unimpeachable character.

We take this, then, as actually the proper line of proof—even the standard line of proof—both *relevant* and *sufficient* to prove the reality of the fact of inspiration. That great and sacred fact is in its own nature miraculous, for it is the direct agency of God within the soul; but, as we have seen, it is the personality of God in contact with the personality of man,—his moral will and consciousness,—elevating the entire human personality, not degrading it; and while miraculous, it is at

first what we have called an *invisible miracle*, for it was wrought in the moral depths of the human consciousness, when the soul was alone with God. But the man in whom it was wrought avows it openly, as the very reason why he has come forward to deliver the message then given him to his fellow-men, and his authority for that message. He *must* so far bear testimony to himself as the sole human depositary, as yet, of a fact known only to himself and to God who wrought it in him, in giving him the revelation which he is about to proclaim; and he is fairly entitled to appeal to his own previously known character for veracity, demanding to be believed on that account. They may admit that this is *relevant* evidence, and good so far, but not yet quite enough for proof in a matter of so much importance. It may be that God has also told him what miraculous proof he may offer, authorizing him to do so, and giving him assurance that it will be wrought; or even a choice of proof, as Isaiah was empowered to offer Hezekiah. If so, then the evidence becomes the testimony of *two*—himself and God,—and these the *only two* to whom the fact of the invisible miracle could be known. The miracle is then wrought,—the divine testimony given,—the evidence is complete. Surely this evidence is both *relevant* and *sufficient* in proof that the message is from God.

But it may also be, as in the case of John the Baptist, that God has not authorized him to call for the evidence of miracles. From whence, then, shall he produce his *second* testimony? We say “second testimony,” because we maintain that his own testimony is legally entitled to be received so far, on the strength of his established good character. He may produce the evidence of previous corresponding Scripture, showing the direct relation which its testimony bears to the message which he has been sent to communicate; and if that relation can be rendered evident,—if there be the fulfilment of a former prophecy,—if there be the second element, the completion of a former half-delivered truth, or half-uttered promise,—if in any such way there be clearly shown an indubitable connection between some earlier divine communication and that which he is now sent to proclaim,—then again the testimony of God is produced; and the evidence ought to be regarded as both *relevant* and *sufficient*. Such was the very evidence produced by John the Baptist,—his own sustained by that weight of per-

sonal character which no man dared to question, and direct reference "to the law and to the testimony,"—to the law, in his restoration of the true moral purity and power of the precepts contained in the Mosaic dispensation,—and to the testimony, in his equally direct reference to the predictions of the prophet Isaiah, relative to the promised Messiah. There was, it may be said, one additional element,—his reference, or rather testimony, to Jesus, as the ONE personally unknown to him at first, whose path he had come to prepare, and whom he announced to some in the mysterious words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." At first this could give no additional validity to the authority of the Baptist, because at that time Jesus was Himself unknown; but afterwards *that* testimony was remembered to His credit, when the Jews said, "John wrought no miracle, but all that he said of this man was true; and they believed on Him." This, however, was like the testimony which, not long afterwards, one inspired apostle bore to another; and proves that such testimony is quite relevant.

Our argument has hitherto related mainly to the *first* element of the great idea of inspired Scripture,—the element of *revelation*; but we must now direct our attention specially to the *second* element,—that of *inspiration*. We are not at present about to examine the various theories of inspiration which have been produced: *that* we postpone for subsequent discussion. But some preliminary remarks are necessary to render it clear what it is that the inquiry really implies. Proceeding, then, on the ground that the fact of revelation has been proved by suitable and valid evidence, the question arises: "How is it to be conveyed with full accuracy from one human mind to another?" One human mind has received a divine revelation clearly and accurately: can it impart that revelation with equal clearness and accuracy to another? It can, is the answer, *by means of inspiration*. What is *inspiration*, as distinguished from *revelation*? It is the agency of the Holy Spirit in the man who received the revelation, enabling him to transmit it with infallible accuracy to others, either in speech or in writing. In what way, then, does this inspiration act? how far does it extend? and does it involve the necessity of *verbal inspiration*, that is, inspiration of the very words to be used, whether spoken or written? Such are the questions to which modern

inquiries into this subject have given rise. Let us strip away some of the cloudy haze which is allowed too much to hang around the subject, and involve it in unnecessary obscurity. There is an essential distinction between the *matter* of thought and the *form* of thought, that is, between pure thought unexpressed, and its verbal expression. For it is certain that *thought* is independent of *language*, as every man must know who is accustomed either to mathematical or to metaphysical abstractions; as every man may know, when he makes the experiment of expressing the same thought in different words. It must be possible, therefore, for a revelation to be made by God to the human mind, independently of language. Further, language is in its own nature imperfect, and therefore necessarily an imperfect medium for the communication of thought. Yet, as man can communicate his thoughts by language, so as to convey a sufficiently correct idea of them, it must be possible for him to communicate the thoughts he receives from God as accurately as he can his own thoughts. A written record might therefore contain, and be known to contain, the pure truth of God, and therefore could be justly esteemed authoritative, even though the language were that of the person whom God made the medium of His revelation. But this does not prove that God could not make communication to man by means of language, if He pleased to do so; it does not afford the shadow of an evidence that verbal inspiration is impossible.

But those who hold that inspiration consists in the elevation of the "intuitional power," as they express themselves, are in the habit of applying to the theory of verbal inspiration the term "*mechanical*,"¹ because it reduces, they say, the writers

¹ "Mechanical theory!" What do men mean when they apply the word *mechanical* to a *spiritual act*? The HOLY SPIRIT acting *mechanically* on a *human spirit*? Can these words have any possible meaning? Is it not to physical and material things alone that the term *mechanical* can by any possibility apply?—not to the HOLY SPIRIT holding personal intercourse with the *human spirit*. We do not undertake to explain *how* God can inspire a human mind, and even teach words by His Spirit; but we do request every candid objector to consider well and reverentially what kind of question he is attempting to investigate. *Inspiration* can be traced back into the region of *moral and spiritual causation, of essential personality*. In that profoundest region of being, there cannot possibly be anything *mechanical*, or even what men term *dynamical*, except *moral dynamics*, which presuppose and require *moral freedom*. A *nature* is *moral* when it

to mere tools or instruments; and they name their own theory "*dynamical*," because it supposes inspiration to give to the mind extraordinary susceptibility and power. Let us see what this means. Even if verbal inspiration were communicated to the prophet or apostle, it must, as intelligible language, affect his understanding, unless his intellect were violently suspended from all exercise during the period of inspiration, which is both inconceivable and inconsistent with the recorded facts in cases of inspiration; and if it did affect his understanding, it must have had some "*dynamical*" influence on his mind,—therefore the term "*mechanical*" is inapplicable, and can be used only with an unfair and sophistical design. Besides, there are instances recorded in which verbal inspiration conveyed information which the prophet himself did not understand; but even then, the prophet's mind was "*dynamically*" affected, to use their favourite expression, so far as to impel him to search into the meaning of what he had imperfectly understood; and such searching surely was not "*mechanical*." But truth can be revealed also by the medium of symbolic vision, without either intuitional elevation or verbal inspiration; and the question might be asked, by what name it should be designated, being included in neither of the two forms which they term respectively "*mechanical* and *dynamical*?" The truth is, that

can perceive the distinction between good and evil, right and wrong; and it is *personal* when it is *conscious of its own existence*, and has a *will to choose its own course of conduct*. In that profoundest region *God* and the *human spirit* meet together,—both *personal* and both *free*. God does not destroy the free nature which He gave to His creatures, but restores and increases it by such intercourse, and can employ its willing and free agency only by preserving *to it* and *in it* the full enjoyment of its freedom; while the human soul, in subjecting freely its will to Him, is in that very deed performing the highest and most energetic act of its own most perfect will and most absolute freedom. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant hears." Returning from that spiritual converse, the human spirit, full of the Holy Spirit, resumes its natural government and use of its human body; and when the man thus inspired speaks, is it not most natural and rational to think that his words should be the perfect utterance of his thoughts,—that he should speak the very words which the Holy Spirit taught him? We are not explaining inspiration; but we are attempting to lead the objector into spiritual depths in which, if he be able reverentially to accompany us, he will find that there is not a shade of his objections can continue to exist; and that all that he can do is to abandon his weak and fruitless opposition to the divine truth of inspiration, to believe, obey, and adore.

while it can be proved, and has been amply proved, that the Scriptures were written by inspired men, and therefore possess divine authority, it is necessarily impossible for man to explain or describe in what manner the Spirit of God communicates superhuman information to the human mind, because it is a divine operation, and therefore in its own nature incapable of being explained by man. The attempt to do so is merely a proof of the presumptuous folly of those who make the vain attempt; and their further attempt to fix a stigma on the theory of verbal inspiration,—which a sound and somewhat deep philosophy of the human mind, entering into the profound recesses of personality, proves to be neither impossible nor subversive of human nature's rationality,—excites the painful thought, that all this captious criticism, and select bitterness and mockery of expression, and sophistical disingenuousness of argumentation, may too probably arise from a latent but strong hostility to the divine authority of the sacred Scriptures, and their spiritual holiness and truth.

We do not produce any theory of inspiration; we have none to produce. But we trust we have shown, that it is not inconceivable that God would give a revelation fitted to manifest His own glory in grace, and to secure salvation to man,—that He should impart the knowledge of all this to one man or to several individual men, commanding them to transmit this glad tidings to other men,—and that, knowing their infirmities and tendencies to error, and their need of special spiritual aid to enable them to convey this message of grace and mercy with needed accuracy to others, as He had commanded them, it is inconceivable that He should yet withhold that altogether indispensable gift at the point and moment of communication from man to man where it was most needed, and thus allow the whole glorious scheme of redemption through His beloved Son to become ineffectual for want of the final act of adequate spiritual agency. This, we say, is altogether inconceivable, incredible, impossible! And yet it must be so, unless the plenary inspiration which Scripture claims be true.

We have, however, also shown, that when we look thoughtfully into the profound depths of human personality, and reverentially up to the sacred height of the divine personality, we may become in a faint and dazzled manner dimly conscious that there can be some such essentially spiritual intercourse

between the soul and God, as may at once renew the human soul, restore to it the long-lost image of its Creator, fill it with spiritual life and love, and enable it to think the thoughts which God thinks, and speak the very words which He speaks; and all this not only without violence to the soul, but in most perfect accordance with its original nature, as it came at first holy and free from His hand, preparing it for eternal holiness, freedom, and spiritual life in heaven,—a life which has its essence in being united to God the Father, through the Son the Mediator, and by the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. This is the end which inspiration predicts and accomplishes: *this*, in its essentially divine agency, transmitting revealed truth, *is* INSPIRATION *itself*.

SEC. IV. POSITIVE PROOF OF INSPIRATION—SCRIPTURE.

It was our design in the preceding section to show, that there is not only no absurdity—no illogical begging of the question—to take inspired men as witnesses of their own inspiration; but that in point of fact their evidence was the most proper to be taken first, because in the first instance the inspired man alone was cognisant of his own inspiration. It was, till he told it, known only to God and himself. That he, therefore, should be the first to bear evidence as to that sacred fact, was both absolutely proper, and absolutely necessary. But the proof does not rest on the testimony of a single witness, however trustworthy that witness may be, from his known truthfulness and integrity of character. He is entitled and empowered to adduce other evidence, even more relevant and better than his own: he produces *divine testimony*. This divine testimony may be produced either in the form of a *miracle*, which God works in attestation of the truth of His messenger; or in the character of a *prophecy*, the fulfilment of which will confirm the truth of the message; or by such further unveiling and applying of other Scripture as implied his possession of the same Spirit by which those other Scriptures had been given. In any one of these ways the testimony of God is produced, and fully confirms the personal testimony of the inspired man. And when such complete testimony has been brought forward by any divine messenger, nothing but some dark enmity against the very nature of the message can

adequately account for its rejection. There is no fair, rational ground for rejecting a message confirmed by such testimony. It is not contrary to previously established beliefs, for to them it confidently appeals. It is not inconsistent with the laws of evidence, for it produces ample evidence, both *relevant* and *sufficient*. It has a right to demand a fair, full, respectful, and honest examination.

Let us, then, glance rapidly along the line of proof which the sacred writers produce in testimony of their own inspiration. Moses is properly regarded as the earliest of these. His writings relate that a miracle was wrought, and even repeated, in order fully to convince him that God was sending him on the errand of deliverance to his countrymen in Egypt. This miracle he was empowered to repeat in the presence of the king, to convince him of the divine commission thus borne and thus attested. And when Moses still complained of his own want of eloquence, God said unto him, "Who hath made man's mouth? Have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Then while Moses still hesitated, God said, "Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. Thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." This passage is peculiarly significant. From its position it is entitled to be regarded as supplying the rule by which all similar passages may be interpreted. And, first of all, let it be remarked, that it does not refer to *revelation*. When it was foretold to Abraham, that his seed should inherit the land of Canaan, but should previously sojourn in a strange land, and serve them, and be afflicted by them, and that nation should be judged, and the Hebrew race come out with great substance, after four hundred years,—*that* was revealing and predicting the future, which, now that the time had come, Moses had only to repeat. In order to do so effectually he needed *inspiration*; and accordingly God both promised to teach him what he should say, and gave him Aaron to be his "spokesman." Now this is precisely where *inspiration*, as distinct from *revelation*, comes into action,—at the time when the message has to be delivered to men, that it may influence their conduct. It would be no

straining of the passage to say, that this implied to Moses and Aaron the gift of *verbal inspiration*.

It may be remarked further, that this passage seems to have made a peculiarly deep impression on the Hebrew mind. The Hebrew writers of the period between Malachi and the final destruction of Jerusalem, all acknowledged the necessity and want of a prophet, and therefore received no writings of that period into the canon, though attaching much value to some of them. In giving their own ideas respecting prophecy and their Scriptures, some of the later of them, such as Philo and Josephus, taking apparently the illustration from the instance of Moses and Aaron, asserted that the true prophet was merely God's interpreter, uttering nothing of his own, but merely speaking what God gave him to say—a spokesman for God, as Aaron had been for Moses. For that reason nothing could be admitted into their sacred Scriptures which had not prophetic attestation. And when we reflect how much the mind of the early Christian church, even in the days of the apostles, must have borne the stamp and impress of the Hebrew mind, we may find in this Jewish designation of the prophet the true explanation of what certain early Christian writers probably mean, when they call Mark the "*interpreter of Peter*." They probably mean merely to suggest, that Mark stood in the same relation to Peter as that in which Aaron had stood to Moses.

From the time of Moses forward, we find that the prophets always disclaimed the idea that the message which they were commissioned to deliver was in any degree their own, either in thought or in expression. Even Balaam asserted that he was under an imperative necessity of uttering the very words, and no other, which the Lord should give him to say; and he did so, to the great displeasure of the malignant king. It was not the *thought* only, but both the *act* and the *word* of the prophet, that was thus specially directed. When Samuel was sent to anoint, as the future king of Israel, one of the sons of Jesse, he was inclined to think that the eldest noble-looking young man was the person; but the inspiring Spirit prevented his error, and guided him to the youngest. When the prophet Nathan expressed approbation of David's proposal to build a temple to Jehovah, he spoke without inspiration—both mind and word were in error; but when the Spirit of the Lord spoke to him, and then spoke *by* him, he could then tell that Solomon

should build the temple. There was no error in his second statement, for it was by inspiration. The precise accuracy of the prophetic words was manifested in the name Josiah, given as the predicted king of the house of David who should destroy the idolatrous altar at Bethel; and the necessity of acting in exact accordance with the very words of the inspired direction was terribly manifested when the same prophet perished miserably, in consequence of yielding to the persuasions of the old prophet, who "lied to him."

Several instances are recorded in which the prophet uttered words, the full import of which he did not fully understand. From these instances it is evident, that the inspiration must have related to the *very words* which the prophet uttered, otherwise he could not have uttered them at all. But it is equally evident that he was in full possession of his reason at the time, understood a part of the message, and was very desirous to understand the whole of it. Ezekiel in one instance seems to complain that the Jews were offended with the obscurity of his predictions, and that he himself thought they had some reason to complain; yet he uttered the dark symbolical prediction as he received it. Nor was the prophecy always written down, either before it was delivered, or at the moment of its delivery. Jeremiah in one instance is directed to write a series of predictions, the successive utterances of which had extended over a number of years. In another instance he was commanded to get Baruch the scribe, and speak over again to him the same words which the king had destroyed in their written condition, that they might be preserved in a written record. The same words must have been recalled to his mind with perfect precision by the Spirit of inspiration, in order to be correctly restored.

The whole Hebrew nation, in short, had long been perfectly familiar, not only with *revelation*, or divine truths directly communicated by God, but also with *inspiration*, or that divine truth accurately conveyed in human language, yet in words which were truly the words of God. These divinely inspired writings occupied a position peculiarly their own. They were not the historical records of the nation, although the nation's historical records were carefully noted throughout in them, for sacred purposes. They were not family memoirs, although the memoirs of some of their chief families were related in them,

also for sacred purposes. They were not personal biographies, although some very distinctly personal incidents of individuals were minutely recorded in them, evidently for sacred reasons. They were all known to be what God had specially directed His accredited messengers and servants, the prophets, to record and preserve in the manner and to the extent which seemed to Him good; and the nation felt bound to preserve them with reverential care, whether it could adequately perceive the reason or not, because convinced that such was God's special will. In this manner it is evident that the Hebrew mind was fully imbued with a deep and solemn belief in the reality of inspiration, even to the extent of the very words of the sacred Scriptures. All those writings that bore the prophetic impress and sanction were included within the sacred volume, and none else. It had its own well-known designation, and was referred to and quoted under that designation, without the slightest hazard of that reference being misunderstood.

This view places before us very distinctly the position assumed and the arguments used, first by our Lord Himself, and next by His disciples. In His many discussions with the Pharisees and Scribes, Christ quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures by their common designation, either "It is written," or "As it is written," or "As saith the Scripture," or simply the "Scriptures," never intimating the least doubt that His meaning would be perfectly understood. In some instances His argument turns upon the peculiarity of a word or a phrase, as "I said, Ye are gods," or, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." It does not in the least invalidate His argument, that they might not perceive its full force, from not perceiving the full meaning of Scripture; but it does tend to prove that there must be meaning in the *very words* of Scripture, since Christ thought proper to construct a deep argument on the *peculiarity of the words*. Had they been merely human words, and nothing more, it is impossible to suppose that Christ would have made their peculiarities in any sense the basis of an argument. But the case is very different when they are regarded as the words of the Holy Spirit, which holy men of old had used as inspiration prompted, having often a depth and spirituality of meaning which these inspired men could not apprehend. To Christ they had necessarily the very same depth and extent of spiritual

meaning which they had to the Holy Spirit who inspired them : when He used them, therefore, He necessarily attached to them their *true spiritual meaning* ; and in doing so, “opened to us the Scriptures.”

Further, this infinitely certain spiritual knowledge which Christ possessed, according to which He quoted the Scriptures, He promised to secure to the apostles, when He promised to send them the Holy Spirit. We have already directed attention to the fact, that the Hebrew mind was fully imbued with the idea of the Spirit of God enabling men to understand the mind and will of God. Whether they had precisely the same idea of the third person of the Trinity which we have, or not, may be disputed, and into any discussion on that point we shall not at present enter ; but there can be no doubt, from the common language of the prophets, that they were well acquainted with the idea, that it was by means of the Spirit of God that the prophets had been enabled to know, and speak or write, the mind and will of God. For this reason, when Christ promised to send the Spirit,—the Spirit of truth, to lead them into all the kind of truth which it was the Spirit’s office to teach,—the Spirit, to convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment,—the Spirit, to bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever they had heard from Himself,—the Spirit, to be to them a Paraclete, or Advocate, to plead for them, or teach them what to say and how to plead, in such special emergencies as when called before the judgment,—when they heard such distinct and specific enumeration of the various offices which the Spirit was to undertake and perform for them, they could not but perceive, that all this was equivalent to a statement of the parallel agency of the Spirit of God in the ancient prophets. The Hebrew mind of the disciples must, we are persuaded, have clearly perceived that the gift promised to *them* was equivalent to the gift enjoyed by the *Old Testament prophets* ; since even *we* can perceive the almost precise identity of the *promise*, and the *former actual facts*. And when at the time of His ascension to heaven He directed them to tarry in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high, they would at once understand that they were to wait, as prophets had several times been obliged to do, till the Spirit of God came upon them ; and they would accordingly wait in sublimely solemn spiritual expectation.

We may not attempt to explain in what manner the Holy Spirit filled, elevated, and spiritualized the minds of the disciples on the day of Pentecost; but we cannot fail to mark the absolutely miraculous change which that event instantaneously produced in their conception of the Scriptures, and of their own position and duties. Even on the day of Christ's ascension they still expected that the *Messiahship* was to result in an *earthly sovereignty*. That earthly notion passed away in a moment, by the first influx of the Spirit's enlightening power; and the passages of ancient Scripture which had previously been to them unintelligible, they now clearly understood, because they actually felt these prophetic Scriptures fulfilled in their own blessed experience at that very moment,—their inspiration being that fulfilment.

It cannot but be observed by every attentive reader of the New Testament Scriptures how immediately the apostles adopt the language of the Old Testament prophets, relative to their own inspiration, after the day of Pentecost. As the effect on their minds was immediate and instantaneous, so their own recognition and full consciousness of it was immediate and instantaneous. They did not need to hold a secret consultation how they were to reveal this new event; but as the event itself was public, so their interpretation and use of it was public. They not only spoke miraculously in the native tongues of all the foreigners at that time congregated at Jerusalem, but made at the same time, to the wondering multitudes collected by this event, a full and open proclamation of the gospel, with a clearness of conception and power of expression which would have been impossible for them a few minutes before. They even commence the formation of the Christian church by administering the initiatory sacrament of baptism; and thus prove that they had received full and intelligent spiritual conception of all their duties, as well as due qualification for their performance.

But here, again, we shall do well to mark the difference between revelation and inspiration. The inspiration of the apostles was full and absolute; but it could not operate beyond the *revelation* which they had received, and that was not yet full and complete. The free admission of the Gentiles into the church, and the consequent diffusion of Christianity throughout the whole world, was not yet apprehended by them; and a new revelation, by means of a symbolical vision, was given to the

Apostle Peter, before he could venture to take so bold a step as to enter into the house of a Gentile and preach the gospel. We may add, that the full ratification of his act by the Holy Spirit, filling the minds of those Gentiles as He had done those of the apostles themselves on the day of Pentecost, seems to have been necessary, in order to prevent all further hesitation on the part of the church. It is also both interesting and instructive to perceive how readily, and, as some would now say, "intuitively," Peter recognised the work of the Holy Spirit in those Gentiles as the same which had recently filled his own soul, and enabled him rightly to understand the Scriptures. He had already so far penetrated, by his spiritual discernment, into so much of the meaning of the symbolical vision when he had learned not to call any man unclean; and when now his spiritual consciousness hears and recognises the voice of the Spirit speaking in persons whom a short while before he would have recoiled from as unclean, he knows that holy voice, and without further hesitation follows its guidance. I direct attention to this, because it is of importance to notice, that *inspired men were enabled to recognise the fact of inspiration in others.*

The revelation was now more full to the apostles than before; and their preaching began to pervade Asia and Syria. But many of the Jewish converts were still filled with their old ritual prejudices, and held that it was necessary for even Gentile converts still to submit to all the ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation. The apostles and presbyters and brethren met in council at Jerusalem to deliberate on this point. The previous spiritually attested fact, that "God had granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life," when applied to this question by spiritually minded men, was sufficient for its decision. But the language in which the decision was expressed deserves attention: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us." They do not give merely their own opinion: they give the decision of the Holy Spirit Himself; and add the expression of their own, that the human element in this important decision might the more tenderly and humanly introduce the principle, and remove the prejudice still entertained by their Hebrew brethren. The mixture of authority and gentleness is very attractive, and very much fitted to remove prejudice and awaken sympathy in the hearts of those Jewish converts who were still unwisely zealous for the whole law and ritual of

Moses. It may be noticed how deeply seated these prejudices were in the minds of Jews, when we find the Apostle Paul constrained so repeatedly to resist, and oppose, and refute them, when even Peter had been so carried away and overborne by their strength as to dissimulate rather than openly resist them. Intensely deep and strong was the attachment of the Jews of this period to the ritualistic economy of the Mosaic law,—all the more, doubtless, that they had so largely set aside its spirit; and the Christian converts still strove to cling to it, even after the clear and final decision of the council at Jerusalem. And it is very worthy of remark that Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, to whom it properly belonged to rescue Christianity from Judaical ritualism, is specially careful to prove that he received the gospel which he taught from God and not from man,—by revelation and inspiration, and not by human instruction,—so that his teaching could not be beneath that of the “chiefest apostles” in authority. For the same reason, probably, he never mentions the decree of the council held at Jerusalem, because he would not rest his advocacy of the truth on anything in which human authority even seemed to appear,—so careful were the inspired apostles that every part of their commission should rest on *divine authority alone*.

Mark now with what full, unhesitating, decided precision and authoritative solemnity the apostles speak of inspiration. “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds;” “confirming the word with signs following.” “Ye receive the word of God which ye heard of me, not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God.” “Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.” “Which things we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time (at any time, *ποτε*) by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” “Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you. As also in all his epistles, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures.” “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the tradition which ye have been taught, whether by

word or our epistle." "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him." "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through His name."

It is impossible to conceive higher claims than these to the fulness of divine authority,—claims which would be not less than impious or blasphemous, if they were not true. But they were the claims to which God Himself gave sanction and support, by the miracles which He wrought, in attestation of what they spoke and wrote. We are bound, therefore, to receive them in their fulness of meaning, and to regard them as the actual words of the Holy Spirit Himself.

There is a topic on which I might dwell at considerable length, did opportunity permit; but which, though I can but mention, I may mention here. Not one of the immediate successors of the apostles, several of whom lived during their days, and were even their companions and fellow-labourers, as Barnabas and Clement, ever either claimed inspiration, or were regarded by the church of that period as inspired. Several of the epistles of these apostolic fathers, as they are called, have survived and come down to our age; but they have never been regarded as inspired, and never been received into the canon, because, doubtless, their authors were not apostles. As the Hebrew church admitted the writings of none but prophets, so the Christian church admitted the writings of none but apostles. There was but this peculiarity in each case, that while it does not appear to us at least, that either Nehemiah or Ezra were prophets, it must have been apparent to those of the later prophets in whose days they lived that they were *inspired*,—therefore the writings of these two men were admitted on the authority of those later prophets; so, while it does not appear to us that Mark and Luke were apostles, in the strict sense of that term, it must have been apparent to all the apostles, and particularly to Peter and Paul, that their companions and fellow-labourers, Mark and Luke, were truly

inspired men; and therefore their writings were admitted on the authority of these apostles.

The positive and direct proof of the fact of inspiration, and of the bearing of this great and sacred fact on the formation of the canon, is, we think, complete, distinct, definite, and intelligible in itself, and involving no such logical fallacy as our opponents have attempted to bring against it. Very much more proof might be adduced; but we think the proof which we have stated will be admitted to be both relevant and sufficient, by every fair and candid reasoner who is really willing to be convinced. And as no amount of proof could convince any man who is determined not to be convinced, we may content ourselves with stating what should be enough for men of fair and candid minds. We have not attempted to explain the mode of inspiration, not merely because it has not been told us in Scripture, though that should be a sufficient reason, but also because we do not think that either that immediate act of God, or any other immediate act of God, or miracle—for the meaning is the same,—can be explained either by man, or by any other created being. It can be known as a fact: it cannot be explained as an operation; for it is effected without created means, by the direct agency of God.

SEC. V. HISTORY OF OPINION RELATIVE TO INSPIRATION.

It may readily occur to every thoughtful and reverential mind, that having obtained *relevant*, *sufficient*, and *positive* proof of the true inspiration of the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testament,—the entire Bible as we possess it,—the proper and most natural duty of man was to proceed with all diligence and earnestness to ascertain what inspired Scripture teaches. But the mind of man has always been exceedingly prone to put its own construction on even divine revelations. Our first parents listened to the plausible commentary of the serpent, and received it as a very agreeable explanation of the *first covenant*; and ever since mankind have been prone to follow a similar practice, and been much more willing to believe *their own covenant*, than the plain meaning of the word of God. Throughout the Old Testament history we find that the Jews were always making interpretations of their own, and following their own interpretations, in spite of the

direct and stern remonstrances of the prophets. Our Lord pronounced on their conduct in this respect some of His severest judgments, because they explained away the obligations of the law, and "made the word of God of none effect by their traditions." Even in the days of the apostles the same tendency began to appear among the early Christians. The Apostle Peter complains of those who "wrest the epistles of Paul, as they do the other Scriptures." Fallen, sinful, and rebellious human nature continues to display so much of its wilfulness, even after conversion, as to be prone to put its own construction on even the word of God, given for man's salvation.

It might be shown that this tendency gave occasion to the rise of the Gnostic heresies, and to the whole fantastic school of interpretation and of neo-Platonism which arose in Alexandria, and so long disturbed the mind of the church. The monastic system owed much of its power to the very same elements, as will be evident to all who are conversant with the history of that period. It was but a natural consequence of that strong and continuous tendency, that the Church of Rome, as its progress towards universal supremacy increased, should keep the Scriptures more and more in a state of suppressed concealment, and render more and more prominent and authoritative her own traditions. The result was inevitable, that Rome should constitute herself, not the preserver and custodian of the true inspired Scriptures, but their jailer; and that the affected special sanctity in which she kept them out of the hands of the laity, should be like the dark dungeons of the Inquisition, in which she carefully preserved people from the grievous peril of falling into the snares of heresy.

The great Reformation was the period in which it pleased God to set free the sacred Scriptures, and by their means to set free the human mind from its thralldom of long centuries. But the very vehemence of the power, which the human mind was enabled to put forth at that great hour of its spiritual emancipation, tended to produce a strong rebound to the opposite extreme. This was signally manifested by the ardent and fearless Luther. After having broken by his amazing energy of will and courage the spell of Papal authority, he did not hesitate to question the authority of certain portions of Scripture, and also the nature of inspiration. The one of

these, indeed, was so far a consequence of the other. Had he held a very full and accurate idea of true inspiration, that would have secured him from calling in question the canonicity of any portion of Scripture to which that idea applied with adequate distinctness. But without being acquainted with what we now call the *subjective philosophy*, he acted in accordance with one of its leading principles: he made his own mental conceptions a standard by which to test the books of Scripture, and to decide the validity of their claims to be received as truly inspired. This was making a subjective standard in reality, and testing the claims of Scripture by its conformity to his own conceptions, instead of subjecting his opinions to the authority of Scripture. But this, as already stated, was chiefly caused by the intensity of the recoil from Papal Rome, and partly also occasioned by the fact, that the subject of inspiration had never been adequately examined, its proper and relevant evidences investigated, and the whole inquiry brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

The subject of inspiration became also a topic of controversy between the Jesuits and the Jansenists. Two of the learned Jesuits advanced certain propositions relative to inspiration, in which they maintained,—1st, That it was not necessary that all the *words* of Scripture should be inspired by the Holy Spirit; 2d, That it was not necessary that all its *truths and statements* should be inspired by the Holy Spirit; and 3d, That if any book, written by human industry, without the assistance of the Holy Spirit, should be afterwards attested to be true by the Holy Spirit, it should be received as Scripture. These propositions were instantly and very generally condemned; especially the third one, as abandoning all distinction between Scripture and any book attested to be true. It does not surprise us that such a theory should be produced by Jesuits; for how could the Council of Trent have given canonicity to the Apocrypha, except by means of some such theory? That Council of course held that it was inspired by the Spirit, and consequently that the books which it attested, if not canonical before, became canonical by that attestation. The true canonical principle is, not that a book was inspired because it had been received into the canon, but, *it was received into the canon because it was known to have been inspired*. The controversy between the Jesuits and their

sounder-minded opponents began to wear somewhat of a dangerous appearance; but Rome, with her usual dexterity, suspended the controversy without deciding it, enjoining silence on all parties till the question should be authoritatively decided by the Pope: in which state it still remains, to be used as Rome may find it convenient.

But about the very time when Rome was finding it expedient to suppress the controversy, it received a more complete and dangerous development by means of that great thinker, whose writings have so deeply affected the mind of Europe,—*Spinoza*. About the year 1670, Benedict Spinoza published a collection of the objections that extensive learning, guided by a wonderfully subtle intellect, could bring against inspiration. Spinoza was fully conversant with all the speculative conjectures of his race, the Hebrew, especially as these had been systematized by the peculiar philosophy of that most learned Jew, *Maimonides* (born at Cordulea, in Spain, 1131); and casting these into the alembic of his own intensely subtle mind, he produced a systematic opposition to the very idea of inspiration, which startled and alarmed nearly all the theologians of the period. Le Clerc first, and soon afterwards Grotius, took up the substance of Spinoza's arguments, and produced them in such a manner as to constrain the various sections of the Christian church to direct their attention to the perilous subject. It was not very strange that Grotius was ready to adopt lax theories on the subject of inspiration. His strongly Arminian tendencies rendered him desirous to obtain some new and plausible reason for assuming more liberty with both the language and the doctrines of Scripture than those who held more stringent opinions on the subject were willing, or even consistently able to do. But an unfortunate bias was thereby given to the controversy, which assumed the aspect of a controversy between Arminians and Calvinists, instead of being a very important inquiry into the true nature of scriptural inspiration,—a matter in which all Christians must be deeply concerned. Out of this condition, indeed, it has not yet clearly emerged, as is quite evident from the manner in which writers tinged with Arminianism on the one side, or with Calvinism on the other, still conduct the investigation.

But the final semi-philosophic form, which Spinoza's

thinking gave to the inquiry, had to pass through another phase or two, before it reached its ultimate development. Spinoza had drawn attention to the views of the Jews on the subject of inspiration; and it was natural that Christian writers should pay respectful attention to the opinions of those among whom inspired writings had first been known. But there was one important point to which the Christian authors of that period did not duly advert,—to which, in truth, sufficient attention has not yet been given. It is this: The inspired writers of the Old Testament Scriptures, who alone being inspired knew correctly what inspiration was, never made any distinction between one part of their own Scriptures and another,—never specified any such thing as *degrees of inspiration*,—and made quotations, references, and allusions to the other inspired writers quite indiscriminately, as *all equally inspired*. It was not till after the period of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi,—not till after the spirit of inspiration was withdrawn and the canon closed,—that the learned Rabbis of the subsequent age began to make inquiries into the nature of that inspiration of which they had no personal knowledge,—stimulated, no doubt, partly by veneration, and partly by curiosity. They lived comparatively near the age of inspiration, no doubt, and this might give them some advantage with regard to *historical knowledge of the historical facts* connected with the ultimate formal closing of the canon by Ezra; but they had not, and could not have, any more direct and personal knowledge of *inspiration itself* than we have; and therefore their opinions on that topic have no claim to our special respect, and no right to be received as deciding the subject.

What the opinions of the Jews who lived after the closing of the canon, and before the Christian era, were, may be learned from the Apocrypha, or books written by Jews during that interval, but not received into the canon. The writers of the Apocrypha invariably represent God as the *real Author* of the law, which is styled “holy,” “made and given by Him.” Moses is called a “holy prophet;” and his words are thus quoted: “O Lord our God, as Thou spakest by Thy servant Moses, in the day when Thou didst command him to write Thy law.” The law is termed “the book of the covenant of the Most High God;” this “covenant” is “everlasting;” “its” light “is uncorrupt;” and its “decrees are

eternal." Again, the tokens of a prophet are "faithfulness" and "truth," and the "showing secret things or ever they came." The study of the law and the prophets is stated to be the source of wisdom; even life itself must be sacrificed by a Jew in their defence. These strong expressions prove how deeply the Jews of that period revered their inspired Scriptures; and they suggest at least the well-known and natural division of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Law and the Prophets, with which corresponds the division or designation given by our Lord, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." The further and more complete division into *three* may be regarded as equally natural,—Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms,—the latter division being that chiefly relating to the musical and devotional part of the temple worship. But even when thus enumerated, although there are three distinct divisions, distinct as to subject, there is not the shadow of a suggestion that they differed in degrees of inspiration. And this was the Hebrew idea till the coming of Christ, and at that time. What Jewish Talmudists might afterwards conjecture deserves no attention. But it may be added, that the language of both Philo and Josephus perfectly coincides with the opinions of the authors of the Apocrypha; and may be regarded as confirming the twofold division, Moses and the Prophets, although in the list of the canon by Josephus twenty-two books are enumerated.

After the Christian era, the Jews felt themselves constrained to assume a position as distinctly antagonistic to that of the Christians as they possibly could. And as the Christians made frequent, direct, and very earnest reference to the Holy Spirit, and to those passages of the Hebrew Scriptures which speak of the "Spirit," the "Spirit of Elohim," the "Spirit of Jehovah," they set about devising a theory by which this might be set aside, or at least neutralized. This theory ripened into the theory of *degrees of inspiration*; and, according to it, the Jews then and since ascribe to their sacred books *three degrees of inspiration*,—the Mosaic, the prophetic, and that of the Holy Spirit; which latter they regarded as the lowest of all. The Mosaic degree of inspiration, under which the law was written, was the most exalted: in it no other man of God was thought to share. Prophecy, properly so called, or the foreseeing of what should afterwards come to pass, was regarded

as the next degree. The third and lowest degree was that of the Holy Spirit ; which consisted chiefly in revelations by dreams, and by symbolical visions, so that those who enjoyed only this kind and degree of inspiration, knew only a part of the truth ; and their writings, though entitled to be included in the canon, must be placed in that portion of it called merely the Hagiographa (*ἱεραγραμματα*). This theory was fully wrought out by Maimonides ; and having been skilfully introduced by Spinoza, Le Clerc, and others, it entered unfortunately into the minds of Christian writers, and soon largely influenced all their speculations on the subject of inspiration, instead of being set aside, as it ought to have been, as the mere theory of Jewish philosophical writers of the middle ages, influenced not a little by the subtle genius of learned Arabians.

When the tendency to speculate on the subject of inspiration became prevalent among English divines, the practical genius of the English intellect soon showed its influence, in reducing all the merely vague theorizing of the Continent into an orderly system. Writers of strong practical English sense, though led into a dangerous course of investigation by the great Hebrew metaphysician, directed their attention to the Bible itself, to learn what information it seemed to furnish on the matter. They saw readily enough, that God had been pleased to communicate supernatural information to men in a variety of different ways. They perceived instances of articulate voices uttered by God—angelic or super-angelic visions seen—symbolic visions of a prophetic character—typical or prophetic dreams ; and they admitted these as intimations that there must have been different modes, and probably also different degrees, of inspiration. The next step in this process was to inquire into the *kinds* of statement given in Scripture ; and here also they descried great and numerous diversities,—such as instances of direct revelations of the divine will, in the form of law, commandment, covenant, and precept ;—then practical instructions, admonitions, exhortations, censures ;—then predictions of events still future ;—then lofty spiritual odes and hymns fitted for the subject of divine worship ;—and, finally, a great number of historical or family records, or personal incidents, which might have been known to or collected by the writers, from other sources of information, or from their own knowledge as relating to themselves. These

great diversities of subject seemed to them, in their practical and systematic way of thinking, to imply corresponding diversities of inspiration; and they set about trying to conceive what kind and amount of inspiration would be needed for these respectively, and to give corresponding names to them, such as should indicate their relative degrees.

There is not the least reason to doubt that these English divines thought they were rendering valuable service to the Bible, by giving what appeared to them an intelligible theory of inspiration, which might recommend it to the acceptance of those who recoiled from the more direct and simple statement previously made, and from which they had themselves recoiled. That they were actuated by good intentions will be admitted by all who are acquainted with the characters of the most prominent of those divines,—such, namely, as the late Dr. Pye Smith; Dr. Henderson, of London, an eminent Independent minister; and Dr. Daniel Wilson, formerly of Islington, and subsequently bishop of Calcutta, recently dead. But it nevertheless appears to us certain, that the whole theory is erroneous;—that it was the product, unconsciously perhaps to them, of the peculiar metaphysical subtleties of Maimonides and Spinoza;—and that its tendency is to explain away the plenary inspiration of Scripture.

Let us state these theories of “degrees of inspiration” a little more fully. Dr. Daniel Wilson says, after stating his theory, and enumerating the degrees of what he called *suggestion*, *direction*, *elevation*, and *superintendency*:—“By the inspiration of *suggestion* is meant, such communications of the Holy Spirit as suggested and dictated minutely every part of the truths delivered. The inspiration of *direction* is meant of such assistance as left the writers to describe the matter revealed in their own way, directing only the mind in the exercise of its powers. The inspiration of *elevation* added a greater strength and vigour to the efforts of the mind, than the writers could otherwise have attained. The inspiration of *superintendency* was that watchful care which preserved generally from anything being put down derogatory to the revelation with which it was connected.” This is his theory in his own words.

Dr. Henderson’s theory is somewhat more minute, enumerating five degrees, namely, *divine excitement*, *invigoration*, *superintendence*, *guidance*, and *direct revelation*. He says: “In the

first place, the sacred penmen were the subjects of a *divine excitement*. By this we understand both the supernatural intimation given to the writers, that it was the pleasure of the Most High they should pen any particular book or portion of Scripture; and also the influence by which they were impelled to comply with such intimation. Secondly, there was an *invigoration* experienced by the inspired writers, by which their natural faculties were elevated above the imperfections which would have incapacitated them from receiving those communications of a higher order with which they were favoured, and by which also they were enabled perfectly to recollect and infallibly to reason respecting truths and facts with which they were previously unacquainted. In the third place, the influence was that of simple yet infallible *superintendence*. By this is meant the watchful care which was exercised over them, when, in performing their task, they made use of their own observation, or availed themselves of their previous knowledge of existing documents, or of other external sources, to which they had access. In the fourth place, *guidance* was another of the modes in which divine inspiration operated upon the penmen of Scripture. This view of the subject is suggested by that part of our Lord's gracious promise to His apostles, that the Spirit should 'lead them into all truth.' They were not left to choose their own way; they were guided in the selection, order, and combination of the facts and doctrines to be narrated. The last and highest species of inspiration is that of *direct revelation*. To this head are to be referred all those doctrines which had previously been hid in the divine mind; all knowledge of past events respecting which no record or tradition existed; all acquaintance with circumstances present in point of existence, but of which the writers could not but be totally ignorant; and all communications respecting future contingent events, the foreknowledge of which is the sole prerogative of Deity." Such is the very elaborate theory of Dr. Henderson, given also in his own words. It is needless to transcribe the theory of Dr. Pye Smith, as it is almost identical.

We have been painfully conscious, in the transcribing and reading of these passages, of being engaged in something that might not inaptly be called solemn trifling, or at least elaborate trifling with a very solemn subject. It seems to us as if, on receiving a most important communication from some most dear,

honoured, and venerated friend and benefactor, we should occupy our attention mainly with such topics as the kind of material of which the paper on which it was written was composed, the art of the papermaker, the kind of ink employed, and the method of making ink, the probable kind of pen that had been used, and the skill in penmanship which had been displayed by the writer. It may seem not altogether strange that Jewish Rabbis, after all the life of their system had departed, by being expanded into the fresh and ever-growing vitality of Christianity, should set themselves to pore over their shrivelled parchments, counting every letter, and speculating upon the vain inquiry what degree of inspiration had once been enjoyed by the man whose hand, long since mouldered into dust, had at some distant date framed those faded characters. But that Christian men, members of a living Christian church, should follow their example, and speculate upon degrees of inspiration, does seem passing strange—a lamentable waste of time and energy. Better, surely, to use the living and abiding word of God, than pore curiously over it, as if it were a mere dry anatomical preparation, in which we were seeking the seat of the soul. But let us gravely deal with so grave a matter.

When Le Clerc, following Spinoza, produced not only the kinds and degrees of objections that had ever been urged against inspiration, but also the ancient Jewish theory of *degrees of inspiration*, many Christian divines were startled by the unwonted nature of the assault. Some seemed to think the cause of the Bible lost; others set themselves to consider how it might best be defended. The Dutch divines, with Witsius at their head, asserted the doctrine of inspiration in most absolute terms. Some of them went far beyond Witsius, and declared that every word, syllable, and letter of the whole Bible was inspired; and that the writers of it were merely the instruments in the hand of the Spirit, or hands used by Him,—wrote merely at His dictation, as an amanuensis does,—nay, had nothing more to do with it than a pen in the hand of a writer has to do with the meaning of what it is employed to write. These harsh assertions were soon designated the *mechanical* theory of inspiration, implying that the writers of Scripture were nothing but mere machines.

Some British authors adopted these extreme statements, and repeated them with approbation; but the abler and more

intelligent British divines saw clearly that they could not maintain a theory so harsh and rigid. They thought it more prudent rather to adopt and turn to their own use the ancient theory of *degrees of inspiration*; and after various modifications, arrived at the results which have been stated. The term *verbal inspiration* was very commonly regarded as if it were synonymous with what was called the *mechanical* theory; and the term *plenary inspiration*, regarded as less open either to abuse or to perversion, was employed, and usually appropriated by the advocates of the theory of degrees of inspiration, who also called it the *dynamic* theory. But such mere changes of words could not end, nor even greatly modify the controversy, which in the meantime took another direction.

The nature of the change to which I have adverted will require separate and full discussion; and to that I must devote another section. But a few closing remarks may be made relative to the theory of degrees of inspiration. And, first, one can scarcely fail to be struck with the fact, that Scripture itself does not give the slightest intimation of the existence of any such finely adjusted scale of inspiration. It suggests rather, that either the inspiration was totally absent, in such cases as those in which one prophet said, "The Lord hath hid this from me," and another called for a musician to allay the perturbation of his mind when summoned into the presence of the idolatrous king of Israel; or that it was entirely present alike in every matter to which it bore reference, filling the whole being of the inspired man, and animating every thought, word, look, and action, yet keeping him sublimely calm in superhuman energy. Everything which he did, when thus inspired, must have been done by inspiration, however apparently common it might be, whether it were the casting of a little salt into a poisonous spring, or the writing of a letter to a familiar friend, like that of Paul to Philemon. Again, the theory of degrees is liable to the grave objection of confounding the infinite with the finite. Is not inspiration necessarily and essentially a miracle? It has not, and cannot have, any relation to means. A man may as easily work a miracle by his own power, and yet that event be without the use of means, as inspire himself, or procure inspiration by his own energy. There are of course *degrees* in the *finite*, and we can measure or estimate them. But by what rare method shall we measure or estimate the infinite, and find out

and graduate its degrees? The Infinite Spirit may put forth in the human soul what amount of energy He pleases; but be it what it may, it must needs be infinitely beyond the power or wisdom of man to estimate that amount, and specify its degree. The very thought of attempting to do so seems to me to be little short of impiety,—unintentional and unconscious, I can well suppose; but still a rash attempt to pry into the Holy of Holies, or a foolish attempt to measure the infinite.

SEC. VI. OBJECTIONS OF A METAPHYSICAL CHARACTER.

For some considerable time past, though still within the limits of the present generation, the course of inquiry relative to the doctrine of inspiration has been directed into a somewhat metaphysical character. This direction it received in Britain almost entirely from the publication of a little posthumous work by Coleridge, entitled, *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*; but there can be no doubt that Coleridge himself was very largely indebted to Germany for the views which he entertained on the subject. We frankly acknowledge our strong admiration of Coleridge in many respects, and would not willingly cast any measure of discredit on his name and memory; but our respect for the “old man eloquent” must not prevent us from the fair and candid expression of our judgment on a matter so important. Like almost every Englishman, Coleridge had read only in a special course on theological subjects. He had read what English theologians had written, and what Luther and his followers and close imitators had written, but scarcely anything else. With the whole Calvinistic school, whether Genevan or connected with Holland, he was utterly unacquainted, as he was also with all Scottish divines, with the single exception of Leighton, whose deep piety and even mysticism he greatly admired. Some small knowledge of the English evangelical divines he had also acquired, but from them he could not obtain anything but the narrow and harsh recasts of continental Calvinists; and these only provoked a violent recoil, as they caricatured rather than reproduced what they imitated. In this state of mind he set about the composition of the little treatise referred to; and while in it he manifests a deep love for such Christian principles as he understood, and for the Scriptures in a general sense, he shows also that he

is utterly incompetent to deal with the whole subject in any comprehensive manner, from not knowing its real nature and bearing.

In that treatise Coleridge set himself to refute what he regarded as the prevalent theory of inspiration; and in doing so, his design manifestly was to rescue the Bible from the peril to which he thought it exposed by the prevalent theory. There is in that little work some very fine and noble passages, instinct with genius and religious fervour, expressed with great felicity of thought and language. Yet, as we are thoroughly convinced, it displays an entire misconception of the subject, and produces a theory at least as dangerous as that which it attempts to refute. He reclaims, protests, and inveighs with great vehemence against that theory of inspiration which is commonly termed *plenary inspiration*, which regards the Bible throughout as the very word of God. This theory suggests to him only those extreme and repulsive views which men who are not able to form any intelligent conception of such a subject, have in their rash folly uttered about it. And, directing his attention solely to their crude absurdities, he denounces plenary inspiration as giving such a view of the Bible narrative as cannot be received—repulsive to feeling in some of its sterner narratives, contradictory to reason in others, and depriving the Scriptures of all the natural humanities of real life and personality, rendering its writers the mere *amanuenses* of the Holy Spirit, and inspiration itself what he craves forgiveness for calling a “ventriloquism,” or a mechanical power exerted in a human being rendered for the time unconscious, dehumanized.

Now, it may be admitted, that some men have written and said very absurd things about verbal inspiration and plenary inspiration, confounding the two terms and their meanings; and it may also be admitted, that such absurdities give occasion to the enemies of Scripture to bring forward plausible objections, not merely against such a theory, but against Scripture itself, as if such a theory were the only one held by those who held plenary inspiration. But what has that to do with the real essence of the matter? Let all who hold such crudities, and especially the crudities themselves, be scathed into nothingness by the fierce bolts of this great man’s polemic wrath; but that will not affect plenary inspiration, as generally understood by wise and thoughtful men. If there be danger that scorp-

ticism may be promoted by the consequences drawn from a false theory, or from a true one misunderstood, let an inquiry be begun and prosecuted with all care and calmness, in order that it may be ascertained where the real error lies, instead of bounding away at once, as Coleridge did, to the opposite extreme. There is nearly equal folly in coining a word to explain the meaning of an unknown truth. Some term inspiration a *dynamical power*, and seem to think they have explained inspiration itself by giving it that name. Others term it a *mechanical power*, and think they have at once explained and refuted the theory of plenary inspiration. The great error consists in attempting to explain it at all. It is claimed by the Bible itself; and it should for this reason be admitted, but not explained, though perhaps it may be *illustrated*. Even Coleridge admits plenary inspiration in the case of Moses and of those prophets who were commanded to write,—if not also by implication in the case of the apostles; and yet it is not more easy to explain the mode of such inspiration, and to determine whether it were *mechanical* or *dynamical* in *their* case than in any other. Nay, what, we ask, is gained, or even meant, by using either of these terms? What do men mean when they apply the word *mechanical* to a spiritual act? The HOLY SPIRIT acting *mechanically* on a *human spirit*! Can these words have any possible meaning? Must we invent and employ what is really a glaring contradiction in terms—a *mechanically spiritual operation*—which no man in his senses even dreamt of affirming, in order to condemn a misrepresentation of that claim which Scripture itself expressly makes? Must we, because we cannot adequately conceive and explain that claim, cast loose our trust in the word of God as divinely inspired, and therefore and thereby the infallible revelation of eternal truth, relative to man's salvation? It may not be possible to explain the mode of inspiration: in our opinion, *it ought not to be possible*; since, being a divine act, it lies necessarily beyond the sphere of our cognisance; and he who speaks of explaining a divine act, either utters the essence of ignorant folly, or claims equality with God. But is it therefore incapable of being believed? Such an argument would fearfully limit human belief on all subjects, physical as well as spiritual; for in every inquiry we soon reach what we cannot explain—an *invisible energy*.

In the attempt which Coleridge made to state his difficulty, and the reason why he rejected what he thought the common belief, he mentions first what he holds: "There is a Light higher than all, even *the Word that was in the beginning*; the Word that is light for every man, and life for as many as give heed to it. If between this Word and the written letter I shall anywhere seem to myself to find a discrepance, I will not conclude that such there actually is; nor, on the other hand, will I fall under the condemnation of them that would *lie for God*, but seek as I may, be thankful for what I have, and wait." There is nothing in this deserving censure. In stating the doctrine which he opposes, he states it thus: "That all that exists in the sacred volume was not only composed by men under the actuating influence of the Holy Spirit, but likewise dictated by an infallible Intelligence; that the writers, each and all, were divinely informed as well as inspired." "This doctrine," he adds, "I confess, plants the vineyard of the word with thorns for me, and places snares in its pathways." He then refers to the writings of the Jewish Rabbis (as we have already done to show how Maimonides and Spinoza introduced these theories into the speculations of the church, and how they were taken up by the Arminian divines, and introduced into the English mind, from which sources no doubt Coleridge obtained them), and then says, "Remove the metaphorical drapery from the doctrine of the Cabalists, and it will be found to contain the only intelligible and consistent idea of that plenary inspiration, which later divines extend to all the canonical books; as thus: 'The Pentateuch is but *one word*, even the word of God; and the letters and articulate sounds, by which this word is communicated to our human apprehensions, are likewise divinely communicated.' Now, for 'Pentateuch' substitute 'Old and New Testament,' and then I say that this is the doctrine which I reject, as superstitious and unscriptural." In another passage he says, "The controversy may be reduced to a single question: Is it safer for the individual, and more conducive to the interests of the church of Christ, in its twofold character of pastoral and militant, to conclude thus: The Bible is the word of God, and therefore true, holy, and in all parts unquestionable; or thus: The Bible, considered in reference to its declared ends and purposes, is true and holy; and for all who seek truth with

humble spirits an unquestionable guide, and therefore it is the word of God?"

These quotations are, we think, enough to enable us to apprehend what Coleridge meant to intimate in his brief but pernicious treatise on the subject of inspiration. There is no difficulty in meeting and refuting all his arguments, except what is caused by their vagueness. Where they are in any measure plain and explicit, they almost answer themselves. To the last of these quotations, for example, in which he boldly reduces the controversy to a single question, we would promptly answer, that we believe it to be better, both for the individual and the church, to say, "The Bible is true, because we have found it to be the word of God," than to say, "The Bible is the word of God, because we have found it to be true." And we choose the former of these alternatives, because it is at once safer, wiser, and more suited to give stability to erring and wavering man, to rest his faith on the ascertained and sure word of God, than to trust in the fluctuating results of our own reason, employed in the vain attempt to select divine truth from amid human error, if such be indeed the strange and incongruous intermixture that we call the Bible. Such a selection, besides, could have no higher authority than we ourselves had given it; because it was not the word of God, nor regarded as such, till we had sought out and ascertained, not its credentials, but its truth, and then our approbation constituted it the word of God. It could never, therefore, be intrinsically any rule for our faith and practice.

Further, we have already pointed out the source of all these speculations relative to the inspiration of the Bible, in the very subtle writings of Spinoza, and his use of Maimonides. With the metaphysical writings of Spinoza, Coleridge had long been familiar; and also with the influence of these writings, not only on the philosophers of the Continent, but also reflexly on the English mind. But he was not familiar with the far more accurate and profound manner in which such questions had been treated by the great Calvinist divines. He would have found no such crudities in their writings as those on which he poured forth his eloquent scorn. It is evident that he was not aware of any distinction between revelation and inspiration,—a revelation *from* God, conveying to the mind of prophet or apostle the truth which previously dwelt in the mind of God,

and an inspiration *by* God, which enabled the prophet or apostle to transfer the truth so given to him, without error or deficiency, to the page of a written record, for the benefit of others ; and yet without this distinction the subject cannot be clearly understood. It is equally evident, that he was entirely unacquainted with the whole inquiry relative to the formation of the canon, on what ground any writing was at first regarded as canonical. All that he knew on that subject was what he had gathered from references to Jewish and Cabalistic writers and their wild theories ; consequently he knew nothing about the calm and grave reasons that can be stated relative to the formation either of the Hebrew canon, or of that of the Christian Scriptures. It was not strange that he recoiled from the harsh and repulsive crudities written and spoken by ill-informed and second or third-rate English Calvinistic or semi-evangelical divines ; but it was very deplorable that he attempted to write on a subject of which he was so ignorant, and yet wrote with such an air and tone of confidence, as if he knew it thoroughly, and understood it well. We may add, that in this instance, as in many others, Coleridge manifested a strong desire to bring theology within the grasp of transcendental philosophy, to express theological truths in philosophical language, and even to recast theological truths, when they were not easily reducible to a philosophical terminology, that they might be so expressed ; and very specially to exalt the subjective into a supremacy over the objective, both in the region of philosophy and in the domain of theology. If these points be well understood and remembered, we will encounter little difficulty in dealing with the theories of Coleridge and his followers.

There can be little doubt that the speculations of Coleridge led the way to much of the loose and vague writing that has so much abounded of late in England, on the subject of inspiration. But it is also true that another element was subsequently introduced from the Continent, with which he had little direct acquaintance, the influence of which has tended greatly to aggravate the evil. It was with the philosophy of Germany that Coleridge was conversant,—very little, if at all, with its theology. But the philosophy of Germany was in the meantime working sad havoc with its theology, destroying it far more completely than ever it did the theology of Coleridge ; for his religious convictions and feelings were far profounder and more

reverential than any that were generally entertained by German divines. Never could it have been possible for him to have sunk so low as to entertain notions like those of Paulus and Strauss. But a divine of a very much loftier order of mind, nobler powers of thought, and profounder ideas and feelings of piety, sprung up, partly to rescue the theology of Germany from its deep rationalistic degradation, and partly to mislead it still, with high and fine but deceptive spiritualistic philosophy. We allude to Schleiermacher, and the influence of his pietistic philosophy and philosophical pietism, which actually produced something like a revolution in the religious mind of Germany, and has been introduced of late into Britain. Some explanation of that system of thought, and its consequences with reference to inspiration, we must attempt to give with all practicable brevity.

Schleiermacher began his career in Germany in the year 1799, by the publication of a work entitled, *Discourses on Religion, addressed to the Educated among its Despisers*. There was at the time an earnest contest going on between what the Germans called the schools of Illuminism and Romanticism, the Illuminati regarding themselves as the specially enlightened in all things philosophically, so that their light needed no help from either history or fact; and one of the phases of this proud and cold illuminism was the rationalism of Paulus,—another, the daring egoism of Fichte. The Romanticism of the period was a recoil from this, and an attempt to seek a real historical basis for literature, art, and all the higher culture and belief of the mind. Schleiermacher seized on a new position, and made the basis of all religion to consist in *feeling*. “Religion,” said he, “is neither *knowledge* nor *willing*, but *feeling*. To know, is to place the universe into the Ego; to will, the Ego into the universe. In the realm of knowledge, which is divided into physics and ethics, there is no place for religion; nor in the realm of action, which is either moral or artistic. Religion is in the *feeling*, which refers all the phenomena in the universe to the whole, to the infinite, to the Spirit of the universe. It is first in religion that the original unity of man with the universe is restored, although only within consciousness; it is first in religion that knowing and acting find their connecting link.” The fertile germs of this theory were rapidly and powerfully developed by their author himself,

in another work, the very next year, 1800; yet in that second work a new element was introduced, which he termed his moral standpoint. "That," said he, "which constitutes the nature of man, is not his outward actions, nor his outward fate, but his free personality. Moral excellence consists in representing mankind (humanity) in an individual manner. In the face of mankind, every man should cultivate his individuality, but in such a way as to preserve sympathy and love for other individualities, and hence to remain in union with mankind." Beyond these positions Schleiermacher never greatly advanced; but so far as he did advance, his progress was towards a more true, and simple, and scriptural Christianity. His definition of religion became not merely feeling, but "the feeling of dependence," which Fichte assailed in terms of mockery and scorn, — disregarded, however, by Schleiermacher's "individuality." Instead of the rationalism of Paulus, Schleiermacher proclaimed "religious consciousness," by which he sought to vindicate the historical accuracy of the gospel, so far as its moral aspect is concerned, but left its purely historical element exposed.

It will easily be seen that the theology of Schleiermacher was very defective, and based far more on philosophy than on Christianity. Yet it was an immense improvement on the previous state of mind in Germany. He was himself the son of a simply earnest pious mother, and was brought up in the schools of the Moravian Brethren at Niesky; and had thus acquired strong religious feelings before he had ever begun to make religion itself the object of analytic thought. These feelings clung to him so strongly and warmly, that he was accustomed to call religion "the motherly breast by which his young life had been nourished." Early in life he manifested great love of learning, especially for classical and philosophical studies; and while yet young, distinguished himself by an admirable translation of the philosophical dialogues of Plato. There was thus in his mind the element of a highly cultivated philosophy, and in his heart a deeply fixed and fervent religious feeling. Such a man, so constituted, trained, and qualified, was the very man to awaken and lead on the youth of Germany; and when he became a professor at Berlin, in 1808, while Prussia was writhing uneasily beneath the yoke and in the ruthless grasp of the great Napoleon, his bold free thoughts about man's free

personality aided greatly in the resuscitation then beginning in the Fatherland. Even speculative philosophy, in the hands of such men as Fichte and Hegel, felt the influence of Schleiermacher, and leaned somewhat more to at least christianized forms of expression. At the same time many of the younger theologians, starting from his standpoint, to use a German phrase, began to approximate much more near to true evangelical Christianity than ever their admired teacher was able to do. In this view, it might be said, that to the influence of Schleiermacher we greatly owe such men as Neander, and Olshausen, and Hengstenberg, and Nitzsch, and Stier, and Ullman, and Ebrard, and many more, whose writings may be perused with advantage, though not such as we can in all points approve.

But it ought to be equally apparent, with even a very little reflection, that any direct influence from Schleiermacher on the British mind could not be anything else than detrimental. His primary position, that all religion is in *feeling*, necessarily yields up everything purely *objective* in religion, and makes it *wholly subjective*. "The contemplation of the pious," says he, "is only an immediate consciousness that all finite is altogether in and through the infinite—all temporal, in and through the eternal. It is this which we seek and find in all which lives and moves, in all growth and change, in all doing and suffering; and to know life in this light is religion." In such a religion there can be no idea of sin, unless it be in such a notion as this, that sin appears as "resistance of the finite to the unity of the whole," as he himself expresses it. Further, he condemns the claim of Christianity to "universal diffusion, and to be alone prevalent among mankind as the only religion." "The religion of religions cannot gather enough for its pure tendency towards all that is human; and just as nothing is more irreligious than to demand uniformity among mankind in general, so nothing is more unchristian than to seek uniformity in religion;"—which seems to mean, that there is no real difference among the various religions in the world, provided only that there be in each enough of "religious feeling."

There is no reason to suppose that Coleridge was much, if at all, acquainted with the writings of Schleiermacher. But there is ample evidence that these writings have been admirably studied and followed by the Rev. F. D. Maurice, who

has incorporated what he has borrowed from Schleiermacher with what he had previously adopted from Coleridge. The very title of one of Maurice's most popular works, *The Religions of the World*, is but an embodiment of the theory stated in Schleiermacher's earliest production; and the work throughout is merely a development of the same theory, finding that all these religions are essentially good so far as they are sincere, although not quite so good as Christianity. Again, in Maurice's too famous *Essays on Religion*, there is almost nothing that is not either directly borrowed, or closely imitated, from Schleiermacher; and if this fact had been adequately before the minds of his reviewers, and been by them made clearly known to the public, it would probably have more effectually lowered his undeservedly high reputation, than all the sharp criticisms directed against him have been able to accomplish. For example, Maurice has written many lofty-looking, profound-seeming, and mysteriously grand sentences and paragraphs about every man having within himself a being, if he only knew it, "a strong son of God," the very knowledge of which may be to him regeneration and redemption. "In that community," said Schleiermacher, "which has proceeded from Jesus of Nazareth, we obtain an emancipation, a redemption of the consciousness of God. This cannot be the effect of the community as such, inasmuch as it consists of men in need of salvation, but of the divine life only which the founder of the church left to His people. Jesus Christ was the man possessed of the absolute power and energy of the consciousness of God, the *ideal* man, who has redeemed the world by the life which proceeds from Him. In a profound sense, not merely Christ, but mankind, is the Son of God." "True," added Strauss, "but you have not fully developed the idea. The Christ, as proclaimed by the Gospels, is historically impossible, because the sources contradict each other and the laws of historical reality; and He is to be explained as a myth only, from the Messianic expectations of the time." It is evident that Maurice is only Schleiermacher in an English garb; and we may add, that there is nothing that we can discover in his writings to indicate that he could not also have followed even Strauss, if Strauss had not been already so signally demolished,—except, indeed, the strong love of mysticism, so characteristic of Maurice, which might have prevented him from ever giving to his notions

anything like so definite a form as that which Strauss boldly expressed.¹

The *Philosophy of Religion*, by Mr. Morell, published a few years ago, is a servile reproduction of Schleiermacher's system,—so servile that there is not a single thought in it which can be called his own. The only appearance of anything like originality in it is the more elaborate attempt which he makes to set aside the idea of inspiration, in the sense of a supernatural endowment or gift by the Holy Spirit to certain chosen men. He adopts the term "religious consciousness" from Schleiermacher, and adds to it the phrase, "religious intuition," and then exclaims, as if in rapture with his theory—a borrowed and disguised theory: "Let there be a due purification of the moral nature, a perfect harmony of the spiritual being with the mind of God, a removal of all inward disturbances from the heart,—and what is to prevent or disturb this immediate intuition of divine things? And what do we require in inspiration more than this, or what can more certainly assure us of its heavenly origin?" First, we may reply, the conditions that are described are impossible to man by his own efforts. Next, if man could place himself beside the very throne of God, could he look intuitionally into the very mind of God, pluck out His essential ideas, make them his own, and thus obtain "immediate intuition of divine things," not because God gave them, but because he *took them*? This is not philosophy, but *blasphemy*.

SEC. VII. SPECIAL OBJECTIONS FROM DIFFICULTIES AND OBSCURITIES.

It is my intention, in the present section, to direct attention chiefly to some of the special objections urged against the doctrine of inspiration on the ground of difficulties and obscurities in the text, which, it is alleged, are inconsistent with the

¹ "As to the substance, I have concluded in my book that the evangelical history is a *myth* formed spontaneously and unconsciously in the bosom of the early church. To-day I shall conclude, with *modern science*, that the authors of the Gospels, and particularly St. John, had the fixed intention of deceiving, by inventing a fantastical and miraculous history." —STRAUSS, in Sept. 1857. (Copied from an article in the Paris *L'Esperance*.)

idea of inspiration. But there are a few remarks which, as I think, ought to be made before taking up these topics.

Our attention was devoted almost exclusively to an examination of the views of Coleridge and Schleiermacher, because nearly every argument of any value may be traced to the one or the other of these authors; and because, if they can be satisfactorily answered, the mere second-hand arguments of their followers scarcely deserve any answer. There can be no reasonable doubt that Coleridge's little treatise gave both position and form to the modern opposition to the doctrine of inspiration, just as his philosophical and critical opinions have both given an impulse to, and set a stamp upon, the minds of the greater part of those men of fresh feeling and fervent energy who are now leading and moulding the intellectual life and moral earnestness of England. Very many may say of Coleridge as Schleiermacher did of Jacobi, that they owe him more than they are aware of. For this very reason it seemed necessary that considerable attention should be directed to his treatise; much more, indeed, than its intrinsic merit, considered as a theological treatise, deserved, since it is abundantly obvious that he had not the special knowledge requisite for the discussion of such a subject. It was at once a great pity and a great mistake that ever Coleridge undertook such a task,—a great pity, when we think of the injurious consequences that have followed; and a great mistake that he should have undertaken a task for which he was so utterly incompetent. His fame as an author must rest on his poetry, his criticism, his exquisite style, and his conversation, which was a peculiarly eloquent unwritten authorship; but his philosophy was Schelling rendered into English,—imitated, expanded, perhaps improved in the attempt to christianize it, but not completed; and his theology was merely a multifarious congeries of remarks and criticisms on some of the chief English divines of the Puritan and post-Puritan age, without system and without aim, beyond that of writing his thoughts as they arose,—often beautifully expressed, and sometimes true and profound, but generally desultory and vague.

Coleridge gave an impulse to Maurice; but Maurice, as a theologian, needed a system, and found one to his mind in Schleiermacher, whose views he has almost entirely adopted, taking, however, some pains to adapt them to the English mind.

And as the writings of Maurice have acquired an extraordinary degree of popularity, we have thought it right to examine somewhat closely the writings of his true master, Schleiermacher, because by answering the master we silence the pupil—we pluck the strong feathers from his wing, and lower his lofty flight. This, too, we trust, has been so far accomplished, that any one may follow out the process, and deplume Maurice to any extent he may think proper, and render him equally ignoble and innocuous.

Morell's *Philosophy of Religion* is throughout a servile, or almost contemptible, imitation of Schleiermacher. There is not even an error in it that he is fairly entitled to call his own. The only thing in the whole of the volume which we can consent to call his own, is the manifest purpose for which it was written,—namely, to destroy, if he could, the proper idea of inspiration. He may seem, to a hasty and uncritical reader, to have added something to Schleiermacher's "religious consciousness" by his phrase "religious intuition:" perhaps he himself really thought he had made some advance in thought by the use of that term. We do not think so. What is *intuition*? Into *what* does it enable a man to *see*? Does it enable a man to see into anything but *his own consciousness*,—the *primary judgments of his own mind*? It *does not*—it *cannot*: no man can by intuition see into another man's mind.¹ But Morell ventures to assume, that by "religious intuition" a man may see into the mind of God, and may thereby obtain all that he can need, without any

¹ In order to avoid the hazard of being misunderstood, let me state generally the principles of what is meant by intuition, or intuitive perception of truth.

1. *The primary mark of intuitive truth is self-evidence.* It must be evident, and it must have its evidence in itself, as an object.

2. *Necessity is a secondary mark of intuitive truth.* This necessity implies that the intuition is self-evident; which must be admitted, and therefore cannot at the same time be denied.

3. *The third mark of intuitive truth is universality.* As thus: 1. The truth is in itself evident; 2. I cannot but believe whenever I perceive its existence; 3. Every human being is so similarly constituted, that all perceive and believe it exactly as I do, except only in cases where there is abnormal imbecility or unawakened ignorance.

It will readily be perceived that these principles of intuition apply to all axiomatic thinking,—to all primary truths, primary beliefs, and primary judgments; that they all rest on an objective basis; and that their reception by the human mind requires a subjective conviction, but that the

divine revelation, and without any divine inspiration. If such an assertion is neither *impious* nor *blasphemous*, it can only be because it is *utterly destitute of meaning*. "If so much as a beast," said Moses, "touch the mountain, it shall be struck through with a dart." That such a sentence may be averted, this principle must be remembered : "I obtained mercy, because I did it in ignorance." Let us grant this plea to Mr. Morell, and withhold the condemnatory term, otherwise so justly due.

The extreme point of antagonism to the true idea of inspiration has probably been reached in a recent book, by "The Rev. John Macnaught," of Liverpool, a clergyman of the Church of England. We shall not waste time in any lengthened examination of what this strangely reckless person has produced. A few sentences may suffice. "The only true idea of inspiration, according to which the term signifies *that action of the Divine Spirit by which, apart from any idea of infallibility, all that is good in man, beast, or matter, is originated and sustained*." In accordance with this comprehensive definition he asserts, that there is true inspiration in "the instinct of the owl;" it is heard in "the rushing of the wind;" it is seen "in the springing of a blade of grass;" it "murmurs in the streams that flow among the hills;" and "the hinds of the fields calve by inspiration." And "as there is no evidence that *infallibility* attaches to any of these phenomena, so there can be no such thing as infallibility attaching to the writings of prophets and apostles; and therefore a very large portion of the Bible can have no claim to be believed." Such is Mr. Macnaught's grand new

absolutely first position is *objective*. It is but by means of reflective thought that we conceive of necessity and universality; and even these thoughts have their origin in perceived objectivity. When we perceive that our fellow-men all think and act in accordance with the principles of which we are ourselves conscious, we conceive universality, and therefore we predicate of them all as a totality as we do of our individual self. Experience proves that in doing so we are right, with some slight diversities. Hence the philosophy of thought and the philosophy of human nature.

But, notwithstanding this philosophy of human thought and nature, we find that we never can so penetrate into any other man's heart and mind as to pluck out with certainty what he feels and thinks in his own individuality. It must be manifested, must become objective, before it can be certainly known to us. What shall we say, then, of either the philosophy, or of the religious veneration, of the man who can venture to say that man, by his own intuitional perceptions, can gaze directly and unaided into the mind of the infinite and eternal God!

theory, and the liberal conclusion to which it leads him. When Francis Newman made his attack on the Bible, avowedly as an infidel, it was to be expected that he would deny its inspiration, or reduce it to a level with what he and his followers call the inspiration of genius, according to which Newton, Laplace, Cuvier, Watt, and Milton, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Byron, were as truly inspired as Matthew, John, Paul, and Peter. But here we have the infidel Newman far outdone by a clergyman of the Church of England. His folly and absurdity are antidotes to his malignity.

We are willing to think that Coleridge was impelled to adopt his views, partly by his sensitive recoil from the extravagant language used by ill-informed and declamatory writers and speakers, partly by his unwise desire to bring religion into an identity of expression with his vague philosophy. We are also willing to think that Schleiermacher was honestly struggling to get free from the false philosophy and falser rationalism which were holding the German mind in bondage and darkness; and that, though he did not obtain entire emancipation, he yet received some real light and freedom, and made it easier for his countrymen to attain to higher brightness and enlarged liberty. But it is a different matter when the citizens of a land of gospel light and liberty turn back to darkness and bondage,—when English divines seek the dim regions of German mysticism, deny the doctrine of inspiration, or seek to reduce it to a level with the common things of common nature, and then, escaping themselves from the necessity of believing anything but what they please, publish their crude, incredible folly, as if eagerly desirous to involve their countrymen in similar cold and palpable darkness. Such attempts deserve equally our moral indignation and our scorn.

But there are others, we may hope, who have no desire to depreciate the Bible, and yet feel perplexed by some of the plausible objections which a somewhat subtle infidelity may produce against its historical statements or moral sentiments. Such persons may think they would be relieved if they might safely hold that the Bible was not all equally inspired, and that the passages which perplex them were among the uninspired parts, and might be set aside or explained away without injury to the truly inspired parts, and to the Bible as a whole. To use an expression now become, unhappily, too common, they would

rather think of *the word of God as contained in the Bible*, than of *the Bible as being itself the word of God*. But they have not thought adequately of the peril and the misery of being left to find out by their own unaided discrimination *what parts* of the Bible are *divine* and *must be believed*—what only *human* and *may be rejected*. To the man who is comparatively indifferent, or even thoughtless, this may be, or appear to be, a relief; but to the man who is thoroughly and anxiously in earnest, it must be unendurable uncertainty, and may drive him in his misery to seek a refuge in blind scepticism.

The real reason why the subtle cavils and objections of infidels raise such painful doubts in many minds, is because they have not taken the trouble to inquire and understand what inspiration really means, and what results it would produce in an infallibly inspired record. We have already shown that there are two distinct though kindred elements in the full idea of the inspired Scriptures,—namely, *revelation* and *inspiration*. *Revelation* gives *divine objective truth* as it exists essentially in the mind of God. Miracles and prophecy are the proper evidence that God has given a revelation,—the credentials by which He accredits the messengers to whom He has spoken, and whom He has sent to deliver His message. Then may arise the question, “Is there not reason to fear, from the infirmities and fallibility of the human mind, and from the imperfection of human language, that they may have failed in giving an *infallibly true and correct utterance of the message* with which they were charged?” This is not an improper or unreasonable question. How is it to be answered, or has it been answered? First, let it be observed, that the messengers assert that they are divinely inspired, and thereby preserved from the possibility of error. “Thus saith the Lord,” is the assertion of the prophet; or, “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me.” “God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit,” says the apostle. “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” The full declaration of inspired men, therefore, is, that not their thoughts only, but even their *words*, are *not their own, but those of the Holy Spirit Himself*. This assertion ought to be admitted as conclusive, *first*, on the strength of the miraculous evidence by which these men are attested and accredited; and *next*, on the known veracity and honesty of their characters, as declaring a fact of

which they and God alone are conscious,—a pure and true subjective consciousness on their part,—a miraculously attested confirmation on the part of God.

The objector or scrupulous inquirer still hesitates. These men speak of a mental state of which he has no consciousness ; and he would like to know the mode by which *they* acquired it, or *how* God could have imparted it to them, consistently with the full exercise of their mental and moral freedom : perhaps he adds some mysterious remarks and inquiries about *mechanical* and *dynamical* agency, and still retains his doubts. We do not undertake to explain how God can inspire a human mind, and even teach words by His Spirit ; but we do request our friend to consider well and reverentially what kind of question he is attempting to investigate. *Inspiration* can be traced back into the region of *moral and spiritual causation*—of *essential personality*. In that profoundest region of being there cannot possibly be anything *mechanical*, or even what men term *dynamical*,—except *moral dynamics*, which presuppose and require *moral freedom*. In that region God and the human spirit are together—both *personal* and both *free*. God does not destroy the free nature which He gave to His creature, but restores and increases it by such intercourse, and can employ its willing and free agency only by preserving *to* it and *in* it the full enjoyment of *its freedom* ; while, in subjecting freely its will to Him, the human soul is in that very deed performing the highest and most energetic act of its own most perfect will and most absolute freedom. Returning from that spiritual “colloquy sublime,” the human spirit, full of the Holy Spirit, resumes its natural government and use of its human body ; and when the man thus inspired speaks, is it not most natural and rational to think, that his words should be the perfect utterance of his thoughts, that he should speak the very words which the Holy Spirit taught him ?

We are not explaining inspiration ; but we are leading the objector into spiritual depths in which, if he be able reverentially to accompany us, he will find that there is not a shade of his objections can continue to exist ; and that all that he can do, is to abandon his weak and fruitless opposition to the divine truth of inspiration, to believe, obey, and adore.

But we are willing to return to the regions of more common thought, and to examine some of the popular objections against

inspiration, retaining, however, those higher principles which we have a right to use in explanation, whenever our inquiries may render it necessary to use them. Not that we intend or think it necessary to meet all the frivolous and captious objections brought against the Bible, which were an endless task; but we may meet them in a somewhat classified form, and give such a reply as may meet generally each class. One class of objections is based on what men call *historical difficulties*,—the Bible, they say, containing statements which cannot be historically true. This is simply an assertion of theirs, and nothing more. We have already proved the historical truth of the Bible in every instance in which it was even possible to produce historical evidence of any kind; nay, we have proved that it is more true and more trustworthy than any other historical record in the world, ancient or modern. But the objector now condescends to specify instances,—doubts about the intermingling of the miraculous with the ordinary,—and makes mention of some instances in which the statements of the numbers killed in battles cannot be believed, they are so incredibly great. With regard to the intermingling of the miraculous with the ordinary, we do not betake ourselves to any such evasion as to retort, that on the same ground he might distrust all ancient history, which is all equally intermingled with the miraculous,—which would be a fair retort, yet only an evasion; but we frankly say that the miraculous is *essential to Bible history*, and that it could not be true and credible without the miraculous. For the Bible history is a history of the *creation and fall of man*, and the *method employed by God for man's recovery*, so that it requires the intervention of God throughout in the accomplishment of His gracious design; and not only a history of the process, but also an agent in it, by the recorded testimony which it bears of the whole merciful and gracious design and progressive accomplishment. And as we have already proved the reality and truth of miracles by their own proper evidence, and are quite prepared to do so again, we do not admit that the intermingling of miracles with ordinary events in Bible history has any right to be regarded as even a plausible objection.

Further, with regard to the numbers said to be slain in battle, which in one instance appear to be incredible, or by a judgment on those who impiously looked into the ark of the covenant—and a few other instances,—let it be remembered

that we do not possess the original MSS. of any of the sacred books, nor is it supposed that they now exist. We have innumerable copies of them, but in no case an absolute original; and when we think of the almost inevitable certainty that errors would be committed by transcribers, and how easily such errors might occur in the transcription of large numbers, expressed by numerical letters, we ought not to be surprised at the occurrence of such errors. "Exactly!" says the objector; "that is precisely what I mean. You give up verbal inspiration, then?" Not quite so fast,—we have not done yet. We have not yet come to the topic of verbal inspiration; and it does not follow, that if there were verbal inspiration in the case of the original MSS., no verbal error could be committed by any transcriber. Every one must see, who is willing to see, that there is no necessary connection between the most ample inspiration, even to the words, of the original writer and the MSS. written by him, and each and all of the copies written by ordinary transcribers. Again, therefore, we say, that a special error in the copying of numbers, expressed not in words but in numerical letters, might as readily be expected as an error in copying numbers expressed, as we do in numerical figures, not in words, in which, by the incidental addition of a cipher, *hundreds* might be changed into *thousands*. And as any such error does not affect the narrative—affects nothing but the numbers—we are perfectly at liberty to retain the narrative and regard the numbers as merely some error in transcription. We set aside such an objection, therefore, as merely frivolous and absurd.

Another large class of objections assume the form of complaints relative to the sentiments expressed in certain parts of Scripture, such as the fallacious arguments of Job's friends and some of his own sayings; the harsh and cruel language of David against his enemies; the almost savage laudation of Jael's treachery. "These parts could not have been inspired," say that class of objectors; "they must be ascribed to the erroneous notions or vindictive passions of those who uttered them, and not to the Holy Spirit." Such objections spring from an entire misconception of the design and character of the Bible. The Bible is at once a true history of real events, and a selection of such events as may best both reveal and record the progress of the plan and work of redemption. As a true history of real events,

it places these events before us accurately and vividly as they occurred. Good men and bad men are introduced, as they lived, and thought, and spoke, and acted, with such personal and dramatic distinctness, that we see them, and hear them, and know them, in perfect sympathy or abhorrence. No comment is given ; and none is needed. We see the physical, mental, and moral condition of Job and his friends, and understand how and why they reasoned respectively as they did. We see the sore oppression and cruel outrages inflicted on the Israelites by their successive invaders in the times of the Judges, and can sympathize with them in their exulting songs of triumph, when they obtained deliverance ; while we can scarcely censure the stern retaliation which they inflicted on their barbarous oppressors. The Bible neither approves nor condemns expressly either the language or the deeds ; but it records them with intensely vivid verisimilitude, and it selects and relates such events and incidents as serve effectually to embody and represent the very instruction which is to be given. This is *inspiration* ; and it is this which makes the Bible history so different from all other history, in its singular minuteness, vividness, impartiality, and truth. Events are recorded in it, not because of their secular magnitude, but because of their bearing on God's divine plan of redemption ; and in this view we can see the deep significancy of the little familiar and domestic history of Ruth, for example, because of its relation to David, and through him to the Messiah. And it is when we rightly apprehend David's own Messianic position, that we are in a condition to understand many of his psalms, and can perceive that those whom he calls *his* enemies, are so because they are the enemies of God, and because all their opposition to him and their evil deeds are also and especially opposition to God and to man's salvation. What some term his harsh and vindictive maledictions, therefore, are prophetic denunciations of judgment against the enemies of God and His anointed.

Another class complains greatly of discrepancies and inaccuracies in the statements of the various writers of Scripture. Let it be well noted, that apparent *discrepancies* are *not* necessarily *contradictions*. This should be distinctly marked and understood, as the confounding of these two terms is the basis of many a fallacy. Very many alleged contradictions

have been already reconciled,—so many, that we may well question if there be one real contradiction in the Bible,—question it, even on the low ground of so many having been already cleared away, while every year adds to the number of reconciliations. It is but very recently, for example, that a difficulty in Luke's Gospel has been explained. In Luke ii. 2 it is said, "And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." It would be more correctly rendered thus: "This census, being the first, was taken when Quirinus was governor of Syria." But Josephus mentions a census taken by the same Quirinus, which he makes at least ten years later than that of Luke. This was called a contradiction; and it was held that Josephus was to be believed, and Luke not. Yet as Luke used the word *first*, it might be assumed that he knew of a subsequent census, which might be the one mentioned by Josephus, and then there would be no disagreement; or even if there were, why should not the authority of Luke be at least as good as that of Josephus? But a learned German, A. W. Zumpt, has shown, by conclusive evidence, that Quirinus became governor of Syria at the very time indicated by Luke, and was engaged in the duty of taking a census; that he returned to Rome in about three years; that he was again sent to Syria at the time mentioned by Josephus, and resumed the taking of the census in which he had formerly been engaged. Thus the apparent disagreement has been explained, and both statements proved to be true.¹

It is very satisfactory to have any even apparent contradiction or discrepancy completely removed,—especially when these occur in the record of Scripture itself,—when the statement of one writer seems to disagree with that of another. But any hypothesis that will show the possibility of discrepancies being reconciled, is enough for the defensive. The opponent must *demonstrate* that they are irreconcilable, before he can fairly use them in argument against the Bible. It is well known that the omission of a single unimportant fact may cause two statements to appear to disagree; and how easily and completely they could be reconciled, were that one slight fact supplied. Very probably—we might say certainly

¹ See the explanation fully given in Principal Fairbairn's *Hermeneutical Manual*.

—all the parallel statements in the Gospels could be perfectly reconciled, if we knew only one or two unimportant facts or points that have been omitted. Meantime this may be affirmed, that no *uninspired* book, written by so many different men, at different times, could possibly have been so free from inconsistencies, discrepancies, and even absolute contradictions; as the Bible is therefore, it is *not uninspired*, that is, IT IS INSPIRED.

But there is another view that must be given. All these apparent discrepancies occur in minute details,—not one of them with regard to the main facts. What is the result of this, considering the apostles as witnesses, and their statements as evidence? Every person who is at all conversant with the law of legal evidence knows, that when two or more witnesses agree in the most minute details, there immediately attaches to their evidence the suspicion that there has been collusion,—that they have secretly preconcerted a story to which they are all carefully adhering, and that therefore their evidence is not to be believed. But, on the other hand, if there be full agreement as to the main facts, with special difference in the minute details, these special and minute differences in detail remove all suspicion of its being a preconcerted story, show that each witness is honestly relating from his own point of view, and confirm the evidence. Now this is precisely the case of the writers of the Gospels. They fully agree in the main facts which they record; and there are enough of slight apparent discrepancies in minute details to prove that each evangelist wrote from his own point of view, and without any preconcerted plan. And what, again, does this prove, but the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, in so guiding the men whom He inspired, that they should produce the very best kind of evidence,—such as would most thoroughly approve itself to all men of enlightened mind and sound judgment? If there had been absolute identity of statement, that would have invalidated their testimony; if there had been contradiction as to the main facts, it would have had the same effect;—but agreement in the main facts, and variety in detail, confirms the evidence and establishes the proof, to the conviction of every fair and honest mind, that can understand sound evidence, and is willing to decide and believe in accordance with confirmed truth.

We might further show, that as errors in transcription were certain to arise, unless every transcriber in ancient times and Bible editor in the present day were kept from error by miraculous intervention,—and as such errors have not been prevented,—so there is a close analogy between the result and the point which we have just been considering. There are no such grave errors as to affect any main doctrine; there are enough of various readings, as they are called, or verbal discrepancies of copies, to call forth and exercise the most skilful philological criticism, and thereby engage many in the study of the Bible. This, too, is the result of divine wisdom. It does not in the least invalidate the doctrine of true inspiration, and the production of an infallible record in the first instance: it manifests the care of Providence in preserving all the chief truths; and it requires and warrants a free criticism in the vindication and restoration of the words of inspiration.

SEC. VIII. RELATION OF INSPIRATION TO THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.

The subject of the plenary inspiration of Scripture is of such supreme importance, that I scarcely know how to bring my investigations regarding it to a conclusion. I have just used the term *plenary inspiration*, and the term *verbal inspiration* has also been used in stating the arguments employed by those who complain of that term, and object vehemently against its use, as conveying a repulsive idea of the Bible. These terms I must now to some extent explain, in order to remove as much as possible any misconceptions that might arise, or be retained.

Keeping in remembrance, then, the distinction already established between *revelation* and *inspiration*, we may assume, that no one will dispute the absolutely and exclusively divine character of *revelation* as the sole act of God, communicating to man information relative to truths, principles, and designs, existing previously in the divine mind alone, and therefore of necessity infinitely inaccessible to man in any other way than by *divine revelation*. But when we direct our attention to *inspiration*, understanding that term to mean that spiritual aid given to man—the man to whom the divine revelation was made—to enable him to record in writing that revelation with infallible

accuracy, for transmission to others, and for their instruction, that they may be made wise unto salvation,—it is when we thus conceive of it, that we perceive the importance of *inspiration*, and become aware, that unless it reach us with infallible accuracy, the revelation cannot be to us what it was to the man to whom it was at first given. *Infallible accuracy in transmitted revelation, secured by the agency of the Holy Spirit*, must therefore be the idea which we mean to convey when we employ the expression *plenary inspiration*; and in this sense we use the term.

The term *plenary inspiration*, then, we understand and use as identical with the more lengthened expression, *the infallible accuracy of the transmitted revelation*. It must be plain to every one who thinks carefully on the subject, that unless the revelation be transmitted with infallible accuracy, it cannot possibly be to any other man what it was to the man who at first received it, and consequently cannot accomplish any end worthy of God—cannot either advance His glory, or secure the salvation of man. For if it be fallible, it cannot be supremely authoritative; and men may believe it or not, as they please. In order, therefore, that revelation may not be in vain, there must be plenary inspiration, or *an infallibly accurate record of the revelation*.

“But,” say many of the objectors, “we do not dispute the plenary inspiration of Moses and the prophets, perhaps also of the apostles: what we complain of is, the extension of the idea to the historical records and family records, selected apparently from public archives or private memoirs, in which we cannot see either the need or the propriety of inspiration.” You are but following the Jewish Rabbis, the Cabala, Maimonides, and Spinoza, we reply,—not very trustworthy leaders; but we are willing to meet your objection. The Bible is not, as such objections assume, a heterogeneous compound, partly Mosaic, partly prophetic, partly historical and legendary, and partly hagiographical, consisting of hymnology and moral aphorisms, composed by a great variety of authors, some inspired and some not, and often without plan or purpose. It has properly but ONE AUTHOR, the HOLY SPIRIT, who employed all these men in producing the various portions of this one divinely inspired volume. His design, as we may perceive, by a comprehensive view of the inspired book, was at once to record the

scheme of salvation, as it was revealed in successive stages, adapted to the conditions and capacities of the human race, and to manifest the living reality of that scheme, as it wrought in the lives and actions of individuals, families, tribes, and nations, by whom it was gradually and freely received. Even admitting that the inspired writers of the books of Scripture selected from public records and family memoirs, it appears to us manifest that it required an equal degree of inspiration to select and condense the proper elements for the use of the great comprehensive plan of the whole, and for spiritual edification, from common and known records, as it did to secure the right and infallibly accurate expression of revealed truth. To illustrate this: let there be put into the hands of a *stranger* a mass of public and private records, either relating to the whole of this nation's history, or bearing specially on a portion of it, say the period of the Covenanters; and bid him produce an intelligible, connected, and succinct account, in harmony with the spirit and truth of the nation's character,—and the certain result will be a confused, contradictory, and unintelligible jumble. Put the very same materials into the hands of a *native*, who is himself full of the national spirit and character, and he will produce a work, definite, distinct, vivid, and impressive, instinct with Scottish life and character, such as no one can refrain from believing, as he glows and trembles while he reads.

Now this is precisely the character of the Bible. Every writer of every portion of it, though it may amount only to a page or two,—though it may relate only to a family memoir, like the book of Ruth,—though it may record little more than lists of names,—will be found to be instinct with the spirit of the whole book, producing something needed for its completeness as a whole, yet producing nothing that only tended to cumber the narrative. Unless we keep this point clearly in view, we shall not be able to perceive the peculiar perfection of the Bible. We may think the minuteness of some parts of it superfluous, and may deplore the brevity of others; but if we are aware that they must have been so selected and related, not on account of their secular importance, but because they contained or illustrated some sacred principle, we shall then appreciate and admire the wise perfection of the inspired Scriptures.

“But this amounts to verbal inspiration,” says the objector; “and I cannot admit that *mechanical* theory.” We have already shown that the term *mechanical* cannot possibly apply to an operation of the Holy Spirit, holding personal intercourse with the human spirit; and therefore we regard the use of that word as mere opprobrium, having no real meaning and deserving no answer, beyond what we have already given. We are quite willing, however, to pay some attention to the subject of *verbal inspiration*, although that term has often been assailed as if it contained something so manifestly absurd, that the bare mention was enough to cover both the idea and its advocate with ridicule. True it is, no doubt, that the defenders of that theory have often used very extravagant and very foolish language in stating and defending it; but the erroneous language of its defenders will not make the idea itself erroneous, and we reject their language, as beside the question. By the term *verbal inspiration* there does not seem to be anything more necessarily meant than is unavoidably implied in the term *plenary inspiration*, or than the Apostle Paul meant when he said, “Which things we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” This certainly implies an inspiration so plenary as to be also verbal, —so full as to include not the thoughts only, but also the words, in the teaching of the Holy Spirit. What other or what more than this verbal inspiration can mean, we cannot conceive: what other or what less than this plenary inspiration can mean, we cannot even imagine. Yet since men startle and recoil from the very mention of verbal inspiration, I would not use that term unnecessarily and too early in the discussion of the subject. I would not employ it in my primary proposition. I would rather state, and explain, and prove plenary inspiration, as the first term in my disquisition or argument; and if it should be found to involve verbal inspiration as a necessary consequence, leave that to follow as the unavoidable conclusion of the argument, but also, as clearly defined and calmly reasoned out in the course of the argument itself. By this process we may avoid giving offence to the ill-informed or the prejudiced, —set aside injurious misapprehensions and misstatements,—and establish true and sound views of inspiration on a basis that cannot be shaken, and by arguments that cannot be answered.

By reverting to a process of illustrative thought, or thoughtful inquiry into the primary elements and laws of the mind, in its *personality*, as attempted in a previous section, we may be reminded that an indefinitely close approximation was made to a proof, that plenary inspiration, even to the extent of infallible accuracy in the use of words most suited to express the spiritually communicated revelation, could be conceived of, without the slightest violence to the mind, in its profoundest being, and in the exercise of its highest powers and faculties. The words which a man in such a state of inspiration used, would be at one and the same moment most truly his own words, uttered by the prompting of his essential personality, and therefore retaining all its individuality, and most truly the words of the Holy Spirit, uttered by His inspiration, and therefore maintaining all His infallibility. This is inspiration—*plenary*, if you prefer that term,—*verbal*, if you can receive it; but use what term you may, the *very inspiration of the sacred Scriptures*.

It does not, as we have proved, imply any violence to man's moral nature and moral and spiritual freedom, while it elevates and sustains both in their highest action. And as it extends but to the directly inspired men, prophets and apostles, in what they were inspired to speak and write, not to those who transcribed their writings, it leaves full and free scope for the most exact and careful exegetical criticism of the text of Scripture. It does more: it *demand*s such criticism. For since we have not now any of the original autograph manuscripts of the inspired writers, but only copies; and since there must inevitably be graphical inaccuracies in these copies, unless the copyists had been all miraculously preserved from any error, which Scripture nowhere asserts,—it is our imperative duty to obtain the very closest approximation to the original that may now be possible, by means of collating manuscripts, ascertaining their harmony, or the preponderance of agreement in the case of obscure or doubtful readings, and by all the methods that extensive learning and earnest piety can employ. This, we think, should be enough to satisfy even German criticism; and this we not only concede, but urgently require. For although it may not be possible for us ever to obtain with absolute certainty an exact rescript of the original manuscripts, we shall undoubtedly obtain an indefinitely near approximation to it,—

we shall see difficulties, obscurities, and discrepancies cleared away in the process,—and we shall obtain in the meantime the inestimable gain of being closely engaged in the reverential study of the word of God. So far from the idea of plenary or even verbal inspiration casting any grave obstacle in the way of such criticism of the text of Scripture, it is, as we think, the very reason why it should be most diligently prosecuted. “All Scripture,” as the apostle says, “is divinely inspired;” its very words are the “words which the Holy Spirit teacheth.” How important is it, therefore, for us to do our utmost, reverentially, to secure to ourselves the possession of these precious words! But let it be done reverentially, and not in the mere pride and wantonness of philological lore. That man will be the best critic of the sacred text, *not* who possesses the greatest amount of merely philological acquirement, but, who is most profoundly filled with that degree of spiritual-mindedness, which enables him to understand the mind of the Spirit, and discern and appreciate His very words.

Conversion and spiritual enlightenment must not, as we have said, be regarded as either identical with inspiration, or even the same in kind. The complete idea of full *scriptural inspiration* implies the combination of *revelation* imparting divine truth directly to the mind, and *inspiration* given to the same mind, enabling it to transmit that truth with infallible accuracy. But *conversion* does not imply either the combined mental state, or either of its elements. It does not imply revelation, but only the new spiritual faculty of understanding, and appreciating what was previously despised as foolishness. It does not imply inspiration, for it is to the inspired word that it reverentially turns, and not to anything of its own; while it feels that living Word searching conscience through and through as with the keen edge of the sacrificial knife, piercing to the dividing asunder of joints and marrow, soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and intents of heart and mind. But while there is thus between conversion and inspiration a difference even in *kind*, there is between them both a deep analogy and an intense sympathy. The essence of the analogy consists in this, that they are both related to a more profound spiritual truth and reality, which actually includes them both: they are both related to the Holy Spirit, and included within His personal agency. HE alone can *reveal* and *inspire*, HE alone can *convert*

and *enlighten the soul*. And although the work of conversion is different, not only in *degree* but also in *kind*, from the work of plenary inspiration, yet are they both operations of one and the selfsame spirit, dividing severally as He will. It is in this that the deep analogy resides,—in this, that the intense sympathy lives. And it is for this deep and great reason, that none but a converted and spiritually enlightened man can be a good and safe critic of Scripture; and the more perfect his spiritual enlightenment becomes, in the progress of his sanctification and growth in grace, the more cautious, discriminating, and trustworthy will become his criticism of the inspired word of God.

There is yet one topic, already touched, on which I must offer a few additional remarks. I have endeavoured to show that there is not any reason to suppose that even the highest kind of inspiration implies any violence done to the free human personality of the inspired man; and that, therefore, we ought to expect that the most natural and true aspect of human character and personality would appear throughout the Scriptures, giving them the most perfect adaptation to every variety of human character. In order to prosecute and illustrate this thought a little, let us resume a primary position. The real nature of the inquiry regarding inspiration seems to be this: “It being admitted that the Holy Scriptures claim to be inspired, is there anything in this claim so repugnant to reason that it cannot be believed?” It is not enough for any man to say, “I cannot conceive how it takes place, and how it affects the man who is inspired.” Neither is it enough to stigmatize it as a mere *mechanical process*, reducing man to the condition of an unthinking, irrational, unconscious machine. We calmly ask, Is it absolutely incredible, or contrary to reason, to suppose that God, who made the human soul, can communicate with its inner being so as to convey to it His own designs, as in prophecy, and His own ideas, as in doctrinal truth, without at the same time suspending all its faculties, and reducing it to an unintelligent vehicle of transmission? And when, further, we perceive that there are differences of style and other mental characteristics very apparent among the inspired writers, are we not led to the conclusion, that the Divine Spirit did not suspend these men’s mental faculties, but divinely used them, presenting absolute truth in special forms, without either compromising the truth or marring the forms?

If a skilful worker in gold should frame hollow moulds of a lion, a lamb, an eagle, a dove, and fill them with pure molten gold : when the mould was removed, and the figures produced, their precious quality would not be depreciated by the forms they bore,—the lion, the lamb, the eagle, the dove, would still be pure gold ; and instead of being depreciated, their value would be enhanced by their adaptation to the variety of tastes in those who might wish to possess them. And is it not at least equally conceivable, that when God intended to transmit divine truth to mankind at large, with all the diversities of mental tastes and sympathies that prevail among them, He would inspire men of varied mental characteristics, allowing the word of inspiration to assume and present all those varied characteristics, so as to suit every diversity of taste and feeling, and yet to retain, all unalloyed, its own unapproachable pre-eminence, as truth divine and absolute ? The high-souled Isaiah roars like a lion over prostrate Assyria, and proud Babylon swept with the besom of destruction, or in exulting response to the blood-stained conqueror of Bozrah, because his whole being is filled with the strong and glorious energy of the lion of Judah. The plaintive Jeremiah mourns like a dove, as if his were the tender voice of Him who wept over doomed Jerusalem. The keen eye of Paul traces the inner workings of the human heart, or pierces into the deep mysteries of spiritual truth, with the lofty, far-searching, and stedfast glance of an eagle ; but through him the Spirit is laying open the secrets of all hearts, and revealing the deep mysteries of God. The affectionate and lamb-like John leans on the bosom of the Lamb of God, and wins us to gentleness, purity, and love.

Does this marvellously perfect adaptation of revealed truth to the minds of those to whom it was revealed, and through whom it was conveyed, reduce these holy and inspired men to mere *machines* ? Does this perfect adaptation of the special revelation to their mental characteristics, and of them to these special revealed truths, impair the divineness of the record, or make it less essentially infallible ? Does it not rather approve to us, even to our intelligent perception, the excellence and perfection of divine wisdom, condescension, and love, thus graciously adapting the message of mercy to all the diversified faculties of the human mind, and all the thrilling sensibilities of the human heart ?

It would be very easy, and might be both attractive and instructive, to follow out this line of thought, and apply it by still plainer illustrations. The whole Bible is full of similar adaptations between the nature of the truth revealed and conveyed, and the characters respectively of the inspired men whom the Spirit of God chose, inspired, and employed. The profound principle of personality, by which it is all pervaded, and to which reference has been repeatedly made, becomes thus very manifest; and to the same extent at once furnishes proof of the unimpaired freeness of the inspired men, and becomes the more extensively adapted to the instruction of all classes of men and varieties of mind. Every earnest reader of the Bible will peruse with profoundly reverential attention the whole sacred record; but he will nevertheless feel himself more attracted by some portions of it than by others, and to them he will most frequently turn in his most deeply pious hours. Not that he regards them as more truly inspired than others, but because the special characteristics of such portions, and of the holy men who were inspired to write them, attract him by a species of personal congeniality—almost affinity,—and he feels that they meet the very longings of his own earnest, anxious, or rejoicing soul. This will even vary with his own varying states of mind and conscience. And whatever be his state of mind,—overwhelmed with the consciousness of sin, sad and depressed by the sense of recent backsliding, and under the hiding of God's countenance, or suffering deep and heavy afflictions, and in need of gracious support, or full of holy and heavenly joy, and striving to find suitable anthems of adoring praise,—in any and every state of mind he will find in the Bible thoughts and expressions as perfectly adapted to his state and need, as if they had been specially written for him. Should one of the speculative opponents of inspiration address himself to an earnest, believing, and experienced Christian, when fresh from the perusal of a passage that had searched and taught his very secret soul, and try to persuade that earnest and spiritually minded man, that the doctrine of plenary inspiration was inconsistent with reason and high criticism, his whole being would recoil from the sophistry, in the clear and strong feeling of his recent intercourse with God in His inspired word. The plain truth is, that an earnest, humble, spiritual, practical Christianity will never either devise objections against

plenary inspiration, or pay much attention to the objections devised by an inapplicable and inadequate philosophy, or a vain criticism. But there are others who are not yet converted Christians, who may be prevented from reading the Scriptures with a teachable mind, by the guileful subtleties directed against the doctrine of inspiration; and for their sakes the Christian minister ought to be able to defend and assert the truth against every adversary.

Many kindred topics crowd upon my mind, to which I would like to advert before I quit the important subject of *inspiration*, but the limits of my course will not permit me. There is, however, one topic to which I must devote a few sentences. The doctrine of plenary inspiration stands related to the proper idea of the interpretation of Scripture, in a manner at once very profound and very comprehensive. Plenary inspiration, rightly understood, implies that the Holy Spirit is the one divine author of the entire Bible; that it is pervaded throughout by a perfect unity of plan and purpose, even when no such plan is very apparent; that there cannot be actual contradiction between one part and another, although it may be difficult to reconcile certain of its seemingly conflicting statements; and that it must be more true and more suitable for us to say, in any instance of seeming disagreement, that we do not understand the full meaning perhaps of either statement, than presumptuously to assert that they contradict each other. Least of all are we entitled to test Scripture by the weak and changeful notions of human opinion. *The analogy of faith* must be our guide. The Scriptures must be their own commentator. *The Holy Spirit must be His own Interpreter.*

Nothing less than this is due to the doctrine of plenary inspiration. It may not be in our power to perceive at once the true meaning of any single passage or isolated text of Scripture. But apply to it the great principle of interpretation, *the analogy of faith*, and it will be found to harmonize with some other portion, or with the spirit of the whole, if no absolutely parallel passage or text can be found. This is what we believe to be the meaning of the apostle, when he says, "No Scripture prophecy is of any private interpretation," or "No prophecy of Scripture is its own interpreter:" it cannot be rightly interpreted if detached from the rest, as if it were

the production of a separate author. There is the one mind and meaning of the one Holy Spirit pervading the entire Scripture; and it can never be right or safe to interpret any passage in such a manner as to contradict or disagree with the general meaning of the whole book. We may not be able to perceive with certainty what it means: let it be left, then, in its present obscurity, till further study, and further prayer, and increased spiritual and scriptural knowledge explain it. But if we try to force upon it an interpretation, either from our own subjective conceptions, or from our arrogant criticism, which does not harmonize with the all-pervading spirit of Scripture, we may be certain that such an interpretation is *not* its meaning. *Plenary inspiration* demands that the *analogy of the faith* be the *principle of Scripture interpretation*.

It has, I trust, been shown, that we cannot form a rational and scriptural conception of true scriptural inspiration, without an intelligent apprehension of its *two* essentially correlated and constituent elements, *revelation* and *inspiration*, both the work of the Holy Spirit,—the *former* communicating some previously unknown divine truth to man,—the *latter* enabling the man who has received the revelation to transmit it with infallible accuracy to others; that the latter of these elements, *inspiration*, has an instructive analogy to conversion, although it differs from it not only in degree, but in kind,—yet that the analogy is so intimate, both being the work of the Holy Spirit in the human spirit, that no unconverted and unspiritual man can apprehend what inspiration is and implies; that, rightly and profoundly understood, as the personal intercourse which the personal God can hold with the human personality, there cannot be anything in true scriptural inspiration either inconsistent with the character and conduct of God in all His other gracious dealings with His human creature, or implying any violence to the soul of man, reducing it to a state of temporary unconsciousness, but the very reverse;—intimating the gracious condescension of infinite love and wisdom on God's part, while elevating the human being to the highest degree of spiritual and personal freedom, and rendering his *thought, will, and action coincident with those of God*.

CHAPTER III.

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

SEC. I. SCRIPTURE AND HUMAN REASON.



THAT there is a relation between God and the human soul, and that this relation must, so far as man is concerned, reside in the highest faculties and powers of his mind, is a great and true thought, full of the most solemn and important consequences to man. These highest faculties and powers are reason, will, and conscience. By *reason*, we understand and mean that high mental or intellectual faculty or power which perceives ideas and their relations and results,—by placing two ideas together, perceives their relation,—and drawing an inference, so frames a third. By *will*, we understand and mean that faculty which implies the possession and exercise of a rational, deliberate, unconstrained, spontaneous choice, forming the essence of man's responsibility. And by *conscience*, we understand and mean that highest faculty which takes cognisance of all the ideas of the *reason*, and all the spontaneous promptings to action, and acts or choices of the *will*,—perceives their rightness or wrongness in a moral point of view,—and gives its decision, for the purpose of thereby determining the conduct and fixing the character of man. It is with regard to these high faculties and powers that man may be said to bear the image of his Creator, and is said in Scripture to have been created in the image of God.

It might be a very pleasing, and could not be a very difficult task, to draw an ideal picture of human nature in what we are entitled to assume as its primary and proper condition,—with all its merely animal and sentient capacities in the highest state of calm, regulated, and peaceful enjoyment; with all its perceptive and reflecting intellectual powers actively employed in receiving the information conveyed to them by the senses relative to external nature, musing on them, framing its own

conceptions, comparing them with the phenomena, so varied, so beautiful, and so sublime, around, and gathering the kind and degree of knowledge which they were fitted to convey; with all its highest mental faculties and powers, reason, will, and conscience, in full and harmonious action,—*reason* arranging, comparing, inferring, concluding, according to the information supplied by sensation and reflection,—*will* choosing freely, spontaneously, rationally among the rational motives so placed before it, prompting it to action, and putting forth its activity according to its own choice,—and *conscience* exercising supreme rule over all, in virtue of its power to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, and its consequent authority to control both *will* and *reason* in all that can relate to moral duty,—yet even in that supremacy ever looking up reverentially to God for His clear light to guide, and His sovereign will to sanction and enforce all its decisions. This would be the perfect harmony of the whole man; and it would also and necessarily be his perfect happiness. When the sentient nature had laid its report before the higher percipient nature, it had done its full duty, and would not attempt to force the superior faculties to receive or conceive contrary to their own judgment. When the percipient and cognitive faculties had arranged intelligibly their report, and laid it before reason, as they understood it, and according to their experience, they would not interfere with that high faculty in the exercise of its function to arrange, classify, systematize, and by analysis and synthesis frame science, as the final form of man's knowledge of nature. When reason had completed its lofty task, it would introduce all the results into the region of the will, leaving it free to decide, to choose freely, and to act spontaneously, according to, contrary to, or apart from, the motives thus brought forward, on its own sense of responsibility. And will itself would, in the very act of forming its choice, respectfully solicit the supreme judgment of conscience, to ascertain, before adopting a choice and acting upon it, whether that choice were such as the moral faculty could approve, never violently attempting to overbear that rightful ruler by its own imperious energy. Conscience, in harmony with both reason and will, might, on receiving this appeal, perceive intuitively, in accordance with its own nature, the rightness or the wrongness of the proposed course at once in almost every instance; but where any peculiar difficulty appeared, would at

once apply to God for His decision, and to that give immediate and implicit obedience, thereby regulating the conduct of the entire man in holy accordance with the sovereign will of God.

Every one will admit, that this is what a rational, responsible, and moral creature ought to be and do,—what man, if he acted always in accordance with the proper nature and tendencies of the constitution of his physical, mental, and moral being, would be and do. But every one ought also to admit that man does not thus live and act; nay, so uniformly does the very reverse, that we may conclude he *cannot*, whatever be the cause. Those who call themselves, and are called, philosophers, usually treat of human nature, its constitution, and the laws and operations of the mind, as if man did exist and act almost precisely according to the outline I have sketched. They all reason and philosophize about man as if there had been no fall, and human nature had sustained nothing to pervert and deprave it, and to prevent it from acting according to its primary constitution and design. This is unphilosophical; for it is leaving out of their investigation, not only one great and all-pervading fact, but a whole class of facts, and yet drawing a conclusion as if they had all been included. Their method is unphilosophical; and their conclusion must be wrong.

The error of the philosophers, however, although great and injurious, is not so grave and pernicious as the corresponding error of a great number of theologians, who speculate about human nature in a manner almost identical with the fallacious theories of the philosophers. We have already had occasion to refer to the views of Schleiermacher and his many followers, both in Germany, and now in this country. The whole of that large and influential class of theologians frame their systems without almost any reference to the fall, and consequent moral depravity, of man. They do not deny that there is evil—even *sin*—in the world and in man; but they reduce this evil, or sin, if they must so call it, to the scarcely culpable condition of *defect*, not requiring any ATONEMENT, but needing merely some clearer enlightenment to reason, some more self-denying and self-sacrificing energy to will, and some more authority to conscience. In all these respects, they say, Christ has set us a perfect example; and we have only to follow it steadily and throughout, and all will be well with us.

But before proceeding with our investigation, there is one

point to which we must direct attention a little further. We have said that it is in these highest faculties of the mind—reason, will, and conscience—that the human spirit bears and manifests the image of its God and Creator. It has been previously shown that these constitute our *proper personality*, and also that in their infinite and eternal unity they constitute the *divine personality*. Still further, it has been shown that *personality* implies the possibility of intelligent personal intercourse and communion. It follows, that if the human soul had retained unimpaired all its original faculties in their primitive right relation, subordination, and purity, they would have been in a condition to enable the soul to hold converse and communion with God. In that condition, *conscience* would always have readily obtained such divine light and authority as to decide in accordance with rectitude; *will* would always have cheerfully and freely complied with the solemn decisions of the moral faculty thus divinely guided; *reason* would have framed its conclusions in conformity with the clear and calm light thus always shining upon it from above and from within; and the entire intellectual and physical nature would have placidly and joyously obeyed the genial guidance and government of the higher faculties, or, rather, of God, working in and employing all those faculties, in full compliance with His own infinitely wise and holy will,—that is, so far as God pleased to hold intercourse with man, there being no inherent ungodliness in man to prevent it, or to render it unsuitable for God, or inconsistent with His holy character, to hold such communion with man. Such *was* the state of Adam before the fall,—of such a state the human soul, with these its highest faculties in righteous and holy exercise, was manifestly capable,—and such would have been its conditions and enjoyment had there never been a fall; but it is equally false in philosophy and in theology to reason as if such a condition existed still, or were possible, without a remedial measure sufficient at once to vindicate and secure the glory of God, and to rescue fallen man from ruin and depravity.

The true view of human nature now, as it is and has been ever since the fall, is, that all the human faculties and powers—physical, mental, and moral—still exist, and hold the same relation to each other that they did at first, but that they are all in a state of depravity, of anarchy, or misrule. We have

but to make a full appeal to our own conscience and consciousness, and give a faithful response, to know that one of the prevailing characteristics of human nature is, the rebellion of the lower elements of our nature against the higher, throughout the entire range of our being. Our physical or animal appetites rebel against our intellectual powers; these rebel against the higher conclusions of reason; reason gives false reports to will; and reason and will rebel against the dictates of conscience, and almost persuade it to regard itself as its own law, and independent of God and His law. These results may be ascertained by any man who will fully, fairly, and honestly examine himself, and truthfully state the truth as he finds it. But if any man distrust his own fidelity in the scrutiny of his own bosom, he may direct his attention to human society. He will there easily find that the true and real malady which afflicts what are termed the "lapsed masses" is the rebellion of their animal nature against all the laws of all their higher nature, and their indulgence in all those base sensualities that degrade and destroy the man,—in drunkenness, vice, immorality, and brutal licentiousness.

He may take a higher range, and trace the ruling principles and course of conduct characteristic of the middle and higher classes, even when they are educated men. In these classes he will very generally find an intense amount of selfishness, concealed, it may be, under a fine polished exterior, bland manners, and polite phraseology, but still most intensely selfish, self-indulgent, and ambitious. In many instances calm *reason* rarely rules, and strong, pampered, unbridled *will* rarely submits its inclinations or impulses to the arbitration of *conscience*, *never* to the final decision of the *revealed will of God*. Commerce is mere love of money, and love of the pleasures that money can purchase, unchecked by the plain duties of truth and honesty. Political life is power and partisanship, undisturbed by any such inquiry as whether its course will promote public welfare and be truly patriotic. Such ideas as the glory of God and the general welfare of mankind never influence such men, as their conduct but too amply and manifestly proves.

We shall not expend any more time in illustrating these points. But we may well assume, both that they are true, and that they cannot agree with the fine theories of philosophers, and many philosophical theologians in Germany, and their ad-

mirers and followers in this country. The very plain, obvious, and undeniable truth is, that now, and ever since the fall, *reason* does not see clearly, especially in the region of moral truths; *will* does not choose wisely and righteously, and is often wilfully and violently blind, impulsive, and headstrong, refusing to submit to the control of conscience, or any moral and spiritual power; and *conscience* has lost its power and authority, cannot enforce its dictates, and too frequently sinks into a lethargic apathy, ceasing to exercise even the feeble remains of its rightful though disowned supremacy. We do not say that these faculties have ceased to exist. Reason is still reason, and in matters of a purely physical or intellectual nature can produce lofty and true science; but on moral subjects it often sees indistinctly, argues confusedly, and concludes fallaciously. Will is still will, exercising its faculty of choice, though not now freely, being under the yoke and bondage of sin, impelling to action, and acting under the inevitable condition of responsibility. And conscience is still conscience, marking the distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil, feebly advocating the right, and warning against the wrong, but dimmed in vision, seared in sensibility, and bereft of absolute supremacy.

Yet God speaks to man in His revealed word of inspired Scripture, as still possessed of these faculties—reason, will, and conscience,—as still a rational, accountable, and moral being; and even appeals to these very faculties while addressing fallen mankind. But He speaks authoritatively as God, and with a voice that demands obedience. Scripture is God speaking to man with supreme authority—speaking to *reason*, to *will*, and to *conscience*, because they are the faculties with which, from their proper nature as He created them, He can hold intercourse, and because their highest and best exercise of their characteristic functions is to hear Him, and when they hear, to obey. What is *their* office, when HE so speaks?

We have now reached the main question, towards which the preceding remarks have been directing our course. There are many who say, without well understanding, we may believe, what their words fully mean, "That the proper rule of faith and practice for man must be Scripture and reason." This they think a great deal better than either "Scripture and tradition," or "Scripture and the authority of the church."

We have already seen, in both these instances, that the humanly added element is speedily employed by man to supersede the divine element; that in the one case tradition supersedes Scripture, and in the other, the authority of the church supersedes Scripture. From these instances we might expect a similar result in the case of Scripture and reason, that is, we might expect that reason would be used to supersede Scripture, and to constitute itself the sole rule of faith and practice. It will be our duty to show how far this is the result in this theory.

Many centuries have elapsed since this theory began to disturb the church, and to introduce dangerous errors into the Christian system. It might easily be shown that it entered very largely into the philosophical neo-Platonic fantasies of the Alexandrian divines, characterizing deeply all their systems both of doctrine and of Scripture interpretation; and it would deserve a more full investigation than it is now in our power to give it. But it is chiefly with regard to Pelagian views that we now direct attention to the subject. The essence of these views,—Pelagian, semi-Pelagian, Arminian, and similar errors in modern times,—consists in this, *an inadequate conception of the fall and its consequences*. From this it follows easily, that human nature is not wholly depraved, that reason still retains all its original powers, and that it is its province and prerogative to judge even the statements of Scripture, and to receive, modify, and reject, according as they approve themselves to its supreme decision. Not only reason, but also will and conscience, are restored to all their pristine power and dignity by this theory; so that will is not in any bondage to sin, and conscience is supreme arbiter of right and wrong, not needing any enlightenment from God, beyond what it already holds and exercises as its high prerogative. According to this view, Scripture must appear and be judged at the tribunal of these high faculties. *Reason* must judge what it may think rational or reasonable, admitting no more than it approves; *will* must freely exercise its own faculty of choice, obeying only where it pleases to obey; and *conscience* can of itself determine what is right or wrong, good or evil, accepting what seems to it good, and rejecting what does not suit its standard.

This presumptuous theory wrought more or less powerfully and distinctly throughout all the period commonly called the middle ages, and may be traced in the writings of the school-

men, forming at times an element of a protesting nature against the arrogant pretensions of the Romish system, and keeping it partially in check. It would present an interesting subject of investigation to trace the counterbalancing tendency of these two erroneous theories during a succession of centuries, in which the Bible itself was almost unknown, except to men of special learning and research. They certainly served to keep each other in check, although direct power lay on the side of the Romish hierarchy; and as both appealed occasionally to Scripture, this mutual appeal tended to preserve the idea, that to Scripture belonged ultimately the supreme authority, and neither to the church nor to reason.

The Reformation was essentially a restoration of Scripture to its rightful dominion, as the supreme rule of faith and practice; and the rapid and early translation of the Bible into the common language of all civilised countries rendered the appeal universal and irreversible. Ignorance had long been the basis of Romish hierarchical despotism, especially ignorance of the word of God; but the universal or unlimited diffusion of Scripture truth not only dispels spiritual ignorance, but secures all kinds of mental freedom and mental enlightenment. But full and absolute liberty implies the liberty of acting wrong in an imperfect being; and it would have been strange indeed, if that liberty had not been to some extent abused, even by those who had so strenuously struggled for its recovery. Even the mighty Luther fell into this error. He had boldly, nobly, and triumphantly rescued the holy Scriptures from the long thralldom in which they had been held by Rome; but he claimed for himself the right to sit in judgment on even Scripture, setting a mark of disapprobation on those portions of it which seemed least to comport with his own mental predilections. This was not merely exercising the right of private judgment as against an arrogant and despotic ecclesiastical authority, but assuming to decide on private and personal, or, as we would now say, on *subjective*, grounds what books of Scripture were, or were not, inspired and consequently possessed of divine authority. The example set by Luther proved highly injurious to the progress of the Lutheran Church, and led to the full development of that arrogant claim of reason which we are considering.

The Reformed Church, as it called itself, and is called on

the Continent,—the Calvinistic Church, as it is commonly called in this country,—was preserved from falling into this error, by having its attention directed almost exclusively to the study of the Scriptures themselves. Their immediate duty, as its learned and earnest divines felt, was not to wage war with Rome, but to elucidate Scripture. The Bible had been set free from its Roman imprisonment,—their business was to make its whole spirit free, that it might freely express the entire system of its teaching. To contribute to this, was the labour of Calvin's life. But not even Calvin maintained the rightful and absolute supremacy of Scripture more than did John Knox; and to this fact is very largely due the spiritual independence which has always been claimed by the true Church of Scotland, as the living embodiment of the free spirit of Scripture in a free scriptural church.

But in Germany, and among the followers of Luther, the erroneous bias which had been given was but too closely followed. Luther's bold, even audacious, subjectivity had set the example of branding certain portions of Scripture, because they did not agree with his reason or modes of thought. Others did the same, and set aside other portions of Scripture. This kind of practice grew into a theory, especially when the followers of Spinoza applied their philosophical speculations to the subject. That theory, beginning with the idea of *degrees of inspiration*, assumed the right of specifying the application of these degrees; then of dealing as it pleased with the lower degrees; then of denying plenary inspiration, while admitting that there were divinely given doctrinal truths scattered throughout the Bible,—claiming for reason the high function of searching out, discovering, producing, and explaining these, and thus constituting reason the judge of Scripture, and the ultimate standard and teacher of religion to man.

It might perhaps be thought, that when human reason thus constituted itself judge of Scripture, and teacher of religion, there would be produced a kind of pacification in religious matters, or rational union, which all reasonable men could join. The very reverse followed. True: reason had been constituted the supreme judge and teacher; but whose reason? Human reason, you may say; but where will you find it? Not in the impersonal reason of Cousin; for every man being a person, no man can enter into the unknown and

incognisable region of impersonality, and hold converse with the impersonal. Not in the rationalism of Paulus; for that does not agree with the "religious consciousness" of Schleiermacher. Not in that religious consciousness; for that does not attain the full liberty of Strauss' mythic theory. Not in myths; for these cannot produce "a strong son of God" in each earnest man, as Maurice desiderates; and cannot soar aloft into the clear empyrean of "spiritual intuitions," and obtain a "perfect harmony with the mind of God," as Morell presumes to write of his aspiring theory. It would appear, then, that there is no such existing unity—no such *ens rationis*, or conceivable entity, as human reason, to be judge and teacher in religion; but the theory ends in subverting, so far as it can, the sole and supreme authority of Scripture, leaving in its stead but the wide weltering chaos of each individual man's separate notion. Most miserable result of this much boasted theory!

But even this is not its worst result. Human reason becomes the individual prejudice of each several man, acting as prejudice, or at best as opinion, under the plausible designation of human reason. Every man accepts or rejects any portion of Scripture that does not seem to adapt itself to his reason, prejudice, or practice. "I cannot accept that statement or that doctrine," he says, "for it does not seem consistent with reason,"—that is, with his opinion. "I cannot believe that," another says, "for it is repugnant to the moral nature and conscience of man,"—that is, to his individual prejudice, or scruple, or notion. In this manner, there is not a single historical statement or doctrinal truth in Scripture which will not be rejected by some person. Not only will this be the case, but it has been so already to an extent almost incredible, leaving scarcely a shadow of admitted divine truth for any man to believe. When human reason thus assumes and exercises the right of judging as to the propriety and truth of what God has said, it commits an act of *rebellion against God*. And this is the position assumed and the deed done by human reason, when it first claims an equal authority with Scripture in matters of faith, then limits Scripture by its theories regarding inspiration, and finally arrogates the right of ultimate decision.

The proper position of reason in relation to Scripture,

claiming as it does to be a revelation from God, divinely inspired and infallibly recorded, is to examine the evidence which Scripture itself affords and calls on man to examine, in order to ascertain whether God has really spoken *to* man and *by* man, —whether Scripture be really His revealed and inspired word, —and then, if this be proved, as we believe it fully is, reverentially and gratefully, humbly and adoringly, to obey what Scripture commands, believing what it states, rendering thus the new obedience of faith and love. And since this is the proper position and duty of reason, it points out the true relation between reason and faith. That relation is closely analogous to what must have subsisted between reason and conscience in unfallen man. Not only did conscience receive through will the motive elements of reason, and decide as to their rightness or wrongness before permitting will to make them acts, but also sent through will its dictates to reason to be enrolled among its permanent motives, thus producing steady and consistent moral action. In like manner ought reason to transmit all its moral and religious elements to faith, there to be rejected or received and arranged in accordance with the mind of the indwelling Holy Spirit, receiving again from faith such direct spiritual instruction and enlightenment as may guide and determine all its conclusions, regulate character and conduct, and render the life of the spiritually minded man a life at once of reason and of faith.

SEC. II. SCRIPTURE AND THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

There are two ideas, kindred yet totally distinct, which arise in the mind, or are suggested to it, when we think of the office of the Holy Spirit and Scripture. These may be briefly expressed thus :—The Spirit of the Scriptures = plenary inspiration; and the Spirit in the reader of the Scriptures = spiritual enlightenment.

The true idea and doctrine of the Spirit in the Scriptures has already been discussed in the lectures on inspiration, and need not be repeated. But a recapitulated summary may be given, that the doctrine may be fully before us, relative to that idea. Scripture claims for itself, in the unhesitating language of the prophets and apostles, who were the human agents in its production, divine inspiration,—“The Spirit of the Lord spake

by me, and His words were on my tongue"—"Which we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." These, and similar statements, we regard as absolute, so far as the claim is concerned, and, using a compendious term to express it by, we call it plenary inspiration. But, making that use of our reason which we are entitled to do, which God even requires us to do,—as rational beings, bound to be always ready to render a reason for all that we believe and hope,—we inquire by what evidence so great a claim is supported, and its validity proved. We inquire first into the mental and moral character of the men themselves,—not as making them witnesses in their own cause merely, though in the first instance they must be so, as declaring a fact of which they alone are conscious,—but for the purpose of ascertaining what confidence may be placed in their statements, or whether these statements should be set aside as the assertions of designing men, or of enthusiasts or fanatics, speaking honestly but under the ungoverned impulses of a wild, heated, and extravagant fancy. We ascertain that they are simple, earnest, honest, unaffected, trustworthy men, moving in the humbler ranks of life generally, but maintaining the character of upright integrity, respected and esteemed by all who know them. When we take the entire range of all the men who claim inspiration, in both divisions of Scripture, we find them in all ranks, from the sovereign to the herdsman, and with all degrees of acquirement, from the highly educated citizen of Tarsus, versant in both Greek and Hebrew literature, to the plain, unlettered fishermen of Galilee. And we find that they had no earthly inducement to make this claim, that it could not even tend to procure for them any gratification, and that it often exposed them to obloquy, danger, persecution, and death. Surely the statements of such men may be believed in the testimony which they mutually, reciprocally, collectively bear in a matter so disinterested, so perilous to themselves.

But their testimony is not unsupported by other testimony. Not only is their testimony that of men above suspicion, in all that relates to mental and moral character, and most manifestly uninfluenced by any personal or ambitious motives,—not only does their testimony support mutually that of each other, though placed in the utmost variety of circumstances, and tried by every conceivable test, in regard to the spiritual fact of

inspiration, of which only inspired men could be competent judges,—but they have the confirming testimony of God Himself, given by miracles and prophecy. The miracles, wrought by the direct interposition of God, as the credentials of these men, that they were sent by Him, and that they speak His message, must be regarded as ample confirmation of their claim at the time, so far as reason was fairly exercised by fair and reasonable men; “for no man could do these things except God were with him.” The prophecies, reaching on, in some instances, to far future ages, formed a continuous attestation by God to the truth of the statements which they made, and the truths which they taught; and the fulfilment of each prediction ought to be regarded as equivalent to a renewal of each miracle, and a present repetition of God’s own testimony.

Further, when we find the divine testimony so directly and strongly given to the fact that God had spoken to these men, and that in speaking to them by His Spirit He had certainly given to them plenary inspiration; and when we find that the prophecies which they uttered have been fulfilled to the very letter, in every word, in every jot and tittle,—can we doubt that the Divine Spirit took direct cognisance and care that the words which they used should convey with infallible accuracy the truths which He taught,—can we hesitate to admit that plenary inspiration includes and even necessitates what is called verbal inspiration? It is impossible to believe that God would give such marvellously full and complete testimony to the revelation which He had given to these, His divinely accredited ambassadors, and leave it doubtful whether they had accurately delivered the message which He gave them,—leave it doubtful whether He had given them plenary inspiration, enabling them to give it with infallible accuracy,—leave it doubtful whether His testimony of miracles and prophecy applied at all to the message as delivered,—including this self-contradiction, that the prophecy, which we find to be verbally fulfilled, is itself in the very message, which opponents assert to be without any divine attestation. This, we say, it is impossible to believe; because, to suppose it, would be to impugn both the wisdom and the goodness of God; and because the prophecy in the message is itself, in its literal fulfilment, a divine attestation to the infallible verbal accuracy of the message as delivered.

We have shown also, that while this plenary and verbal

inspiration can be predicated with certainty of only the original manuscripts, and not likewise and equally of every subsequent transcription and copy, into which therefore slight errors might be expected to creep, and to be transmitted by subsequent transcribers, yet the collation of MSS. has abundantly and clearly proved, that these errors are but slight,—that they do not invalidate or even seriously affect one single important doctrine,—and that by the careful and laborious scrutiny of learned philological critics they are being gradually removed, and the genuine integrity of the sacred text restored. There was a great amount of terror unnecessarily awakened in the minds of some, when learned critics began to investigate and enumerate the various readings of Scripture, as if all trust in its integrity was about to be destroyed. But that terror has passed away from the minds of all sufficiently well-informed Christians; and we can now, without any degree of anxiety, bid the critics proceed with their labours, in the hope of obtaining as the result, a close approximation to the original manuscripts of the inspired writers of the “lively oracles” of the living God.

Such is the result of our inquiries into the doctrine of inspiration; and such being the result, we confidently, gratefully, and adoringly receive and hold the precious doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures.

We are now to consider the second idea already mentioned, namely, *the Spirit in the reader of the Scriptures*. There can be no reasonable doubt in the mind of any thoughtful believer, that when the Lord Jesus gave to His disciples the promise of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by a general statement of His offices, He spoke of the office of the Spirit, not in its special and extraordinary nature, as *inspiration*, but in its common and ordinary nature, as operating in the souls of men, forming, and dwelling in the church. The language itself implies this:—“And when *He* (ἐκεῖνος) is come, He will (ἐλεγξει) convince (convict) the world (κοσμος) in respect of sin (περι ἁμαρτίας), and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not in me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.” “When *He* (ἐκεῖνος), the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth, for He shall not speak of Himself (ἀφ’ ἑαυτου);

but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He shall show you the things to come. *He* (ἐκεῖνος) shall glorify me; because He shall receive of mine, and shall tell it unto you." Let it be noted that it is *the world* He is to convince or convict; and this, His *first* operation, is not inspiration, is not illumination, is not even conversion, but is only *conviction*. Now, conviction of sin, as every believer knows, is necessary, in order that there may be conversion; but a man may be convinced of sin, convicted at the bar both of his own conscience and of the law of God, and yet not converted; and such conviction, if left alone, might either plunge the man into despair, as it did Judas, and probably Ananias and Sapphira, or might gradually subside, pass away, and leave the relapsed man more hardened than before. But this first operation of the Holy Spirit has not in it anything of the nature of inspiration,—it merely takes a man's sins, strips away all their palliations and excuses, and sets them in array before his face; and all this is directed specially to the world,—the man of this world, who has hitherto been so dead in sin that he was unconscious of his own deadness.

The *next* operation of the Spirit is convincing a man of righteousness, because Christ goes to the Father, and abides there. From other passages in Scripture we learn, that Christ has entered into the holiest of all to be our Advocate with God the Father, to plead His own righteousness, imputing it to us, as His blood was shed on account of our sin, imputed to Him. The convicted man saw his own sin and its deserved sentence: he now sees *Christ's righteousness accepted*, for Christ is on God's right hand, *and made the plea for the sinner's salvation*, for Christ, the Righteous One, is the Advocate and Intercessor, and His advocacy cannot fail. Still this is not inspiration, although it is the Spirit receiving of Christ's, and showing it to men, in order to their justification and all its fruits.

The *third* operation of the Spirit, as specified by Christ, is to convince or convict the world "in respect of judgment, because the prince (ἀρχὼν) of this world hath been judged." This implies an advanced state of what we are accustomed to call enlightenment, when a believer is enabled to see the world around him in the light of scriptural truth, and to read all its past history in the same clear light. He can then perceive, not only that his personal sin was degrading and destroying

himself, but that this is universally true,—that sin is the ruin of any people,—that mankind in general indulge in sin, and in this obey Satan, as if he were the ruler of this world,—and that in doing so they fall under condemnation, and perish, from which fate that ruler cannot save them;—whence it follows, that Satan and sin are also under the same judgment,—that the prince of this world hath been judged already, and that so long as men follow and obey him, they are but hastening to judgment and condemnation. Even this is neither revelation nor inspiration, though it implies a new and high degree of spiritual enlightenment, enabling the reader of the Scriptures to understand and apply their teaching in a manner, and with a degree of certainty, altogether impossible to him before.

We might proceed to describe *sanctification*, which is the progressive work of the Holy Spirit, not, however, in the world, but in the believer, and in the Christian church generally, as now distinct from the world. But as this is the combined, united, harmonious, and co-operating action of the three offices of the Spirit already described, we need not dwell on the subject at any length. Only let it be observed, that as sin still dwells in the believer, and will so dwell to some extent, greater or less, while he is in the flesh and in this world, and as he might relapse into a state of lukewarmness, and sink into sinful indulgences in his indwelling evil propensities, he still needs *conviction of sin*. And as he might become too self-satisfied, and indulge in the misproud notion of self-righteousness, he still needs to be reminded that all his own righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and that it is only *Christ's perfect righteousness* that can ever avail him in the sight of God. And as he might be tempted to conform himself too much to this world, in character and conduct, he needs to be reminded continually that *this world and its prince have been already judged and condemned*; that the sentence has often been signally inflicted; and that its final execution will certainly come on the whole world, on its prince, and on all his slaves. This is *sanctification*,—the continuous, progressive work of the Holy Spirit, in one of its aspects, constantly reminding the believer of what is necessary to guard him from relapses into his former condition. And in its more positive aspect, it is the continuous, progressive bestowment of spiritual graces, bearing spiritual fruits unto holiness, and preparing him for the appointed consummation,

even eternal life in heaven, in the presence of the ETERNAL GOD, FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT. While this is advancing, the believer is daily renewed in the spirit of his mind, is daily increasing in the knowledge of the holy Scriptures, and in that true spiritual discernment by which alone their meaning can be rightly understood, and in the growing consciousness of the Spirit witnessing with his spirit that he has been born of the Spirit, and is a child of God, and an heir of heaven, even a joint heir with Christ. This is the sum of true spiritual *sanctification*, whereby believers are sealed unto the day of redemption, but still it is not *inspiration*.

We have directed special attention to this point,—the essential distinction between inspiration and the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit in conversion and sanctification,—because they have been confounded by many into a positive identity, amounting to a denial of inspiration proper; and because even when they are admitted by some, it is only partially, as applicable to the law and the prophets, and neither to the hagiographa of the Old Testament, nor to the apostles, the writers of the New Testament. They write earnestly and strongly respecting “that grace and communion with the Spirit which the church, under all circumstances, and every regenerated member of the church of Christ, is permitted to hope and instructed to pray for;” but while making an impassable chasm—a positive difference in kind—between this and the inspiration of Moses and the prophets, they reduce all the rest of Scripture to the level, or nearly the level, of the writings of the pious and holy but uninspired men of all ages,—there being, according to this theory, no “greater difference of degree than the experience of the Christian world, grounded on and growing with the comparison of these Scriptures with other works holden in honour by the churches, has established.” One direct and conclusive answer to this theory is found in the fact, that the book of Psalms is contained in the hagiographa, and yet it is quoted by our Lord Himself, as well as by the apostles, in the same manner as the other Scriptures, and David is directly asserted to have spoken “in the Spirit,” or “by the Spirit.” This is inspiration as positive and absolute as can be claimed for Moses and the prophets, and is asserted by the Son of God Himself. Scripture itself, indeed, nowhere gives the slightest countenance to any such theory, or makes any such

distinction. The apostolic fathers, as they are called, the personal disciples and immediate acquaintances and friends of the apostles, never dreamt of placing their writings in any such relation to those of the apostles, from whom they always quoted in proof of doctrinal truth in the same manner and with the same deference as from the Hebrew Scriptures. This modern theory, therefore, imported from the Continent, is entirely different from anything ever held by the true church in every age, although it may have what support Jewish Talmudists, Cabalists, and speculative philosophers can render, aided by German subjective philosophy and rationalism, to which no sound thinker or earnest believer will pay much respect.

The truth is, that the whole view is entirely fallacious, depending upon an erroneous view of what the Bible is in itself, and of its relation to man. The Bible is neither a system of theology, nor a creed, nor a confession of faith. It is at once a revelation of divine truth, intended for the glory of God and the salvation of man, and a manifestation of that truth as it wrought in the history of man and the world, displayed by means of examples so produced and so selected as to convey the needed instruction to every one who should be enabled to receive it. That revelation was itself gradual and progressive; and the Spirit of inspiration selected and recorded the proper instances by which this should be made evident to succeeding generations. That revelation was not like the fine-spun systems of recondite thinking in which a species of philosophy delights to indulge; but pointed and practical, arising out of the exigencies of the times when it was given, and suited for immediate use. Further, it was natural and free, exhibiting in every instance the character of man in his need, and of God in His justice, goodness, mercy, and grace. In its mode of expression also it would be natural and free, suited to and displaying all the characteristics of the men by whom it was communicated, yet without error. A perfectly true statement of any fact or doctrine may, it seems to me, be conveyed by different men, in different words, each of them using the mode of expression most natural to him, and yet each giving a sufficiently correct account of the matter. Inspiration does not seem to me to prevent, but rather to secure, this. If the Divine Spirit were to communicate to me a message from God, commanding me to repeat it to my fellow-men, but not promising me any assist-

ance in the great and solemnly responsible task, I should feel overwhelmed with the sense of responsibility, dreading that my words would never be suitable adequately to convey the heavenly message. Like Moses himself, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others of the prophets, I should shrink from the task, under the feeling of utter inability and unworthiness. But should God say, "I will be to thee a mouth and wisdom : Go, have not I sent thee!" I should then feel that I might speak freely and naturally—as freely and naturally as ever I did in common conversation ; for the Holy Spirit would see to it that I spoke truly.

It must also be carefully observed, that to these characteristics revelation might be expected very specially to add, that it would be limited to the purpose for which it was designed, namely, to the moral government of God, and the salvation of man. Great wrong has often been done to revealed and inspired Scripture, by attempting to connect it with human science. It ought to be understood, and soon, I trust, will be universally understood and admitted, that Scripture was not given to teach man anything that his own faculties were able to find out ; that it has nothing to do directly with human science ; and that it uses the common modes of expression when referring to common things, without regard to the precision of scientific language. If due attention were paid to this principle, as must ultimately be the case, we should be less annoyed with the inferior classes of semi-scientific men attempting to show contradictions between science and Scripture, and with the not unfrequently absurd attempts of religious men to produce a forced semblance of agreement between them, when in reality they have nothing else in common but this, that God is the ultimate author of both.

Revelation gives the direct heavenly truth ; *inspiration* selects and records the proper facts, public or private, for illustration of that truth, in every element of it, and throughout. In this view, and it is the only true one, *inspiration* is as much required to guide a man in the selection of the proper instances from public or domestic records, or even from events within the range of his own personal knowledge, as it is for securing infallibly correct expression to revealed truth. And thus it is that inspiration is seen, not only in such books as Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Psalms, but also in the books of Judges,

Kings, Chronicles, and Esther,—not as revealing direct heavenly truth, but as displaying truly how it lived and wrought in the character and conduct of living and acting men. This is the true mode of viewing these portions of the Bible; it points out their true value; and it entirely sets aside all the captious objections urged against such parts of the inspired record. This is *the Spirit in the Scriptures*, and in every part of the Scriptures, for the special use of that part, and according to that use, yet everywhere infallible. When directing our attention to the idea of *the Spirit in the reader of the Scriptures*, we were led to notice that a measure of spiritual life, grace, and enlightenment is needed by man, and given to him, in order that the teaching of the Spirit in the Scriptures may be understood. This is what all Christians are instructed to hope and pray for,—this is what has been enjoyed by holy and pious men, more or less, in all ages; but this has never amounted to *infallibility* in the case of any man since the death of the last of the apostles. The apostolic fathers never presumed to claim infallibility. Origen, Clement, Augustine, Chrysostom, Athanasius, never presumed to claim infallibility. Luther, Calvin, Zuingli, Knox, Cranmer, never presumed to claim infallibility. And when we peruse the writings of the best and most godly men in all ages, from the times of the apostles down to the present day, we not only find that none of them ever claimed such infallibility as is characteristic of Scripture, and as they all ascribed to it, but we also sadly find more than enough instances of human infirmity, error, and sin, to convince us thoroughly of the humbling truth that they were *not infallible*.

Further, while we owe and pay great respect and deference to the decisions of synods and councils, and believe that the Spirit in the church has often guided, and may be expected to guide, the church to such decisions as God will approve and ratify,—yet, as our Confession says, “Synods or councils may err, and have erred;” so that we can never say of any of their decisions that they are infallible, except when they are manifestly in accordance with the mind of the Spirit, as already given in Scripture. It may be hoped that when humble, earnest, God-fearing men and ministers assemble in the name of Christ, their living Head and King, with prayer for His special divine presence, and for the Holy Spirit’s grace and

guidance, their minds will be solemnized, their passions stilled, their prejudices dispelled, their diverse opinions reconciled, their conflicting judgments overruled and united, and all brought into harmony with the holy will of God; but such an effect springs not from human wisdom,—can be produced only by the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit; and to the one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, should ever be ascribed all the praise and all the glory.

To one strongly contrasted topic I must allude, although I have no inclination to dwell on it. How striking is the difference between all these views and the pretensions of Popery, Puseyism, mysticism, and many other kindred fallacious theories relative to the true standard and ultimate rule of faith and practice! In the Papal system the Holy Spirit can have no recognisable and authoritative position, because the Scriptures cannot have any such thing as sole authority, that there may be room for tradition, and for the ultimate authority of the self-styled infallible church,—reside that infallibility where it may, whether in the Pope alone, or in the Pope and a general council, or in a general council alone—a point not yet decided.

The Puseyite system also sets aside virtually the Spirit, by setting aside the sole authority of Scripture, that it may exalt the church, and by limiting the operations of the Holy Spirit within the narrow channel of what it terms apostolical succession. This theory it has borrowed from Rome; and were its advocates to act consistently and honestly, they ought as speedily as possible to unite with Rome, for to that result their exclusive, arrogant, and unscriptural theory inevitably leads.

All mystical theories, such as the Quakerism of former times, and the Plymouthism of the present age, tend equally to deny the authority of the Spirit in the Scriptures, that they may give pre-eminence to their misconception of *the Spirit in*, not the reader of the Scriptures, but *the individual believer*. They thus abjure the scriptural doctrine of the Christian ministry, and of the unity of the church, and turn the idea of a universal Christian brotherhood into universal individualism.

It is when we unite into one the idea of *the Spirit in the Scriptures* with the idea of *the Spirit in the reader of the Scriptures*, that we obtain the full and true conception of the Holy Spirit's office, without either confusing and blending inspiration

and ordinary spiritual enlightenment, or rejecting either of these essential yet distinct functions and operations of the Holy Spirit, in His application to the human soul, of Christ and the redemption purchased by Him.

SEC. III. SUFFICIENCY AND PERFECTION OF SCRIPTURE.

The object of this section is to point out briefly the sufficiency and perfection of Scripture for all the purposes of a divine revelation. It is evident that such a subject could furnish matter for an elaborate treatise; but I must do what I can to condense it within the limits now at my disposal.

The great and leading purposes of a divine revelation must of necessity be "*glory to God and salvation to man.*" The latter element or topic may be stated more generally and comprehensively as *eternal life to man*. The reason for adopting this most comprehensive form of the *second* term in the statement is, that it includes the idea of the necessity of a revelation to unfallen man, and the object to be accomplished by a revelation even to unfallen man, that he might receive the promise of eternal life, as the recompense and reward set before him at the close of his *probation*, and might know the terms according to which it would be granted. The more common but limited term *salvation* implies that man is at present in a *lost* state, and exposed to *perdition*, from which he needs to be *saved*; and it may be said that to be saved from perdition is equivalent to eternal life. This is essentially true; but it is also true that the term could not with strict propriety be applied to man in his new-created, sinless, unfallen condition, and that yet even in that condition a *revelation* was necessary for him. We have already introduced this idea in a previous part of the course; but it seems desirable to state it again here, and to give it some additional and explanatory illustration, suited to the present purpose.

It is not possible for us, perhaps, to realize, with any considerable degree of distinctness and certainty, the condition of the first man immediately after his creation; but this we feel, that we cannot form any clear conception of him, in accordance with our own knowledge and experience of human nature, other than that which would represent him possessed of all human faculties and capacities in their highest possible condition, but

all at first in a *latent state*, as *capacities only*, till called into action by influences or agencies external to himself. External nature, in its exquisite adaptation to his sentient nature, would first arrest his attention, and arouse his percipient and intellectual faculties and capacities. But what was to arouse his high moral nature and his sovereign moral faculty? Let it be kept in mind that, born as we are in the family and social state, there cannot be a moment of our existence in which our moral faculties are not subjected to the action of external moral influences, fitted to educe and cultivate them as soon as they are capable of being so cultivated. But it was not, and could not be so with the first man. There was nothing in the whole range of external nature that could even tend to call his moral faculties into action; and even his intellectual faculties could have risen little higher than into a state of delight, wonder, and conjecture. A divine revelation was absolutely necessary to enable him intelligently to know and glorify the Creator of himself and of all things around him.

The *first revelation* had of course its specific design, for the accomplishment of which it was perfectly sufficient. It manifested the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God in creation, and thus it enabled man intelligently to glorify God. Delight in all the beautiful and benevolent arrangements of nature became elevated into gratitude and love to their and his own Creator; conjecture what all these manifold adaptations might mean was raised into the high region of knowledge, certainty, and rational admiration; and wonder was transfigured into adoration. Such were the necessary and primary results of the first revelation; but they were only the *primary*. That first revelation contained another and a higher element, founded on a still greater human necessity, or, rather, a greater divine principle, and adapted to produce a far loftier effect. The true idea of a moral nature in a created and consequently subordinate being, contains, we apprehend, the *moral necessity of a probation*. The moral creature must be placed "under law," and must know that he *is so*. That law must give him the ideas of *duty* and *responsibility*, placing before him its high sanctions of reward or punishment, resting not merely on a power which he cannot resist, but on a rightful authority which he feels that he *ought to obey*, and leaving him in a condition and with a capacity sufficient to enable him either to

obey or disobey, according to his own free choice. Such a revelation would not only establish an element and principle of *probation*, but also institute a *law of life*; and that life, if the probation were successfully accomplished, becoming *life eternal*.

Now this is precisely the character of the first revelation, in that brief record of it which is given in the beginning of the Bible. It took full cognisance of the entire nature of man, sentient, intellectual, and moral, and lifted each of these elements into its highest refining and ennobling sphere of action. It did more: it gave to the moral faculty not merely a moral rule, but a moral hope. It lifted conscience above the sphere of reason into the loftier regions of faith, while retaining all that reason and its sphere could furnish. It tended by its operation to transfigure conscience into *spirituality*, thereby preparing man for a *translation*, when his term of probation closed, into that spiritual and eternal life of which he had become capable, by his knowledge of God, and obedience to His revealed will. And yet all this would have been the result, not of man's merit, but of the assimilating power of the divine principles made known to him, and rendered vital and transforming agencies within him, by the divine revelation which God had graciously vouchsafed to give to the rational, moral, responsible, and ultimately spiritual, soul of man.

But man being in honour abode not. And what did the first revelation then and thenceforward teach sinful and fallen man? It taught him that he was a *sinner*; that he had *forfeited* the *reward* and *incurred* the *punishment* of the law which he had broken; that the wrath of God, deserved by him, was *abiding on him*; that there remained for him "nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." The first revelation had distinctly declared the fearful penalty, but it had not revealed or promised any remedial measure; and it was utterly impossible for man to imagine any method whereby the law could be maintained, the penalty inflicted, and yet the sinner saved from the dread sentence of death.

A *new revelation* was given, containing still the essence of the primary divine intention, but suited now to the changed condition of man, and the circumstances in which he now stood. The new revelation was a revelation of gracious and

redeeming love, but based upon and containing within it the essence of the first revelation, and the maintenance of divine holiness, righteousness, justice, and truth. It contained still essentially and prominently what was necessary to secure "glory to God:" it could not otherwise have been a suitable manifestation of God. It manifests God, not only as Creator and Sovereign, which the first revelation had done, but as maintaining His sovereignty, and displaying in divine combination His attributes, all concurring in redemption, as holy, righteous, just, wise, true, merciful, and gracious. Of these divine attributes man might well have expected to find the greater number arrayed and armed against him; but could not have expected, or even conceived it possible, that they could all unite and be displayed in accomplishing his salvation. This, therefore, is the second great element in the new revelation, the salvation of man, fulfilling the first, eternal life to man, and securing by both "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST."

But let us look somewhat more closely at this revelation of redeeming love, as it comes into contact with fallen man, and works the great change necessary to his salvation and eternal life. Man is not now as he was when he came first from the hand of God. *Then* he had no propensity to evil, no proclivity to sin. His will had necessarily and essentially the faculty of free choice, otherwise it would not have been will; but it was as free and as able to choose good as to choose evil. *Now* man is prone to evil, and his fallen mind is full of enmity against God, because it is full of guilty terror. Man has still will; and his will has still the faculty of choice, otherwise it would not be will, and he would have ceased to be responsible. But his will is not now so absolutely *free* as it was before the fall; it is now under a species of bondage to sin, involving it at once in slavery and guilt. Nor is his reason so clear and pure as it was before the fall; for the fearful fact of moral evil has darkened and defiled even reason, till it can neither see so clearly nor report so truly as it was originally constituted to do. And the supreme faculty, conscience, has lost not only its supremacy, but also its moral sensitiveness,—has become blunted in its perceptions, partially blinded, seared, hardened, and susceptible of being easily deluded by habit and prejudice, and overborne by passion. In such a condition man is not

capable of true happiness,—of pure, holy, refined, elevated, spiritual, true, and lasting happiness, such as can alone suit the nature of a moral and immortal being.

It is to man in this condition—to mankind thus characterized—that the new revelation, the revelation contained in the Bible, comes; and it comes to rescue him out of this condition, to free him from these characteristics, that he may be capable of salvation and eternal life. There can be no greater error, and yet there is scarcely one more common and prevalent, than the notion that man can be saved without *an entire change of character*; and not till this is adequately understood, is it possible for man to perceive the true nature and divine value and power of the revelation of redemption. It is to this point that our attention is to be chiefly directed at present.

Every sufficiently intelligent and clear-thinking man ought to be able to perceive, that no mere act of *power*, and *no revelation of mere power*, could have any efficacy in promoting the salvation of man. Mere power can have no efficacy in the moral region, in the region of will, nor with regard to a rational and responsible creature. Force or compulsion must destroy morality, will, and responsibility; therefore mere power could not effect the salvation of man. Further, either the use of mere power, or the revelation of power, however manifestly omnipotent, could not, in such a case, even vindicate and maintain the glory of God,—as we must see, if we rightly understand the subject. For the use or manifestation of mere power would be inconsistent with due regard to the nature of the end in view,—the object to be attained. We always recognise wisdom in the right choice and use of means adapted to the right accomplishment of the end. Now the salvation of man is a *moral end*, and nothing can rightly effect this but *moral means*. God is Himself in the highest sense a *moral agent*, although also omnipotent; and it must be at once most suitable to His own nature, to the nature of man, and to the nature of the object to be accomplished, for Him to employ *moral means*, rather than to employ *power*,¹ although the power may have its position as *evidence* that the agent in this remedial measure

¹ Innumerable errors have arisen in all ages, from imagining some relation between power and the ideas of either *holiness* or *sin*. *Power* may be connected with either, but not *essentially*.

is God Himself. Any remedial measure, then, fitted at once to vindicate and advance the glory of God, and to secure the salvation of man, must be essentially a measure which, in its revealed and applied aspect, accommodates itself to the *moral nature of man*; but so as to quicken, elevate, stimulate, and refine, enlighten and exalt, purify and spiritualize the whole human being, in all his loftiest and noblest faculties, renewing him again into the image of God.

Anything either different from this, or short of this, could not be, nor even promote, the *salvation of man*. Take a brief view of his nature as it now is, and has been ever since the fall,—"earthly, sensual, devilish," or "full of envy, malice, and wickedness, hateful, and hating one another,"—"carnal minded, which is enmity against God,"—and it must be immediately evident that force or power might crush, or coerce, or overbear this, but could not change it; that an unconditional pardon to beings of this character, leaving all these elements still in their wild and wilful fury and anarchy, might be an everlasting misery, but could not be salvation. But, on the other hand, let the revealed remedial measure be one of infinite grace and love, yet also of infinite holiness and justice, and it must be seen and felt that it comes to human nature in an infinitely more attractive and convincing character. The manifestations of grace and love are expressly fitted to expel aversion, or alienation and enmity; while, at the same time, and in the same revelation, the exhibition of the most infinite holiness, guarded and enforced by the most awful justice, cannot fail to check every tendency to think light of sin, or to imagine that the continuation of a sinful character is compatible with salvation.

But this is the very character of Scripture as a divine revelation. It places fully before us the character of God, the Creator and Sovereign of the universe, in all His infinite attributes. It places before us man, as God created him, and as he has degraded himself. At the same time it reveals to us a remedial measure, which God is pleased of His own free and sovereign grace to employ, for the vindication and maintenance of His own glory, and for the salvation of man. This remedial measure displays, on the one hand, all the majesty of Jehovah, and, on the other, all the gentleness of Jesus. In its very first manifestation and promise both of these appear: man is driven

out of Eden, which his sinful presence could now only pollute, and deliverance is promised to him through one with whom he could not but feel an attractive sympathy—"the seed of the woman." The revelation advances, expands, and brightens; but only gradually, and as man is enabled to bear it. In the meantime the principles of the revelation are working in the heart and life of man; and the inspired word of God, itself the continuous revelation, traces these with perfect and infallible accuracy,—proving, on the one hand, the terrible effects and consequences of sin in all its aspects, in the individual and in the race; and, on the other, the blessed effects of the grace of God, in the hearts and lives of those who receive and obey its holy laws and saving influence. There is not a sinful propensity, or passion, or action, that does not find there its due reproof and punishment, and that not merely in ethical abstractions, but in the lives, and characters, and fortunes of human beings like ourselves. There is not a moral virtue, pure, lovely, and of good report, that does not find there its proper meed of approbation and reward,—and that also not as in some philosophical fiction, but in the common events that befall living and breathing human creatures, of natural flesh and blood, only as guided and upheld by the gracious hand of God.

All this we read in the Bible, recorded with such perfect simplicity, naturalness, and truthfulness, that as we read, the thrilling response of the deeply stirred heart attests its irresistible truth. And as we read and feel, our own nature is experiencing a most congenial training, often far more deep and permanent than we know or imagine. The Spirit of God is in the book which He inspired holy men of old to write; we are receiving, though it may for a time be unconsciously, His teaching; and if He should be pleased to enter also into the reader of the book, and illuminate all within his previously darkened inner being, that reader would soon feel his heart burn and melt within him, his evil passions depart, his dark and wayward prejudices pass away, the narrow encrustation of his selfishness dissolve, the bitter malevolence with which he grudged the superior good fortune of his fellow-man changed into brotherly love, and his enmity against God expelled, to give room to holy gratitude, love, and adoration.

The very fact of the narrative form and character of the Bible is a fact which demands attention, together with what

might almost be called its dramatic aspect. It has been said that Christianity is not so much a doctrinal system as a life; and that this truth is most distinctly seen in the life of Jesus. But the whole Bible is a life: it is the life of Adam and Adam's race; and the life of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, and His redeemed people, who are to Him, "mothers, and brethren, and sisters," as He so graciously and lovingly declared. It is no abstraction, but the *concrete life of mankind*; and there is no man, woman, or child in all the world but may all find a life identical with their own, not pictured on, but living in, its universally and individually lifeful pages. A king may converse there with other kings, greater and more regal than himself; a warrior and a statesman with other warriors and statesmen, whose heroic deeds and comprehensive wisdom cause all similar things to appear like cowardice and folly; a woman may there see other women acting in all the conditions and relations of female nature, and displaying in most engaging beauty, and tenderness, and purity, all that the Creator graciously designed woman to be, as the helpmeet for man; youth may mark the course of other youth, either growing up in the fear of the Lord, and becoming progressively the heavenly trained manhood of their age, or, yielding to all the wild incentives of early passion, destroying themselves, and bringing the grey hairs of their parents with sorrow to the grave;—even the little children may learn to come to Jesus, when they see how little children like themselves were brought to Him, and how gently and kindly He took them in His arms and blessed them. All this lives, and breathes, and speaks, and acts, and weeps, and smiles, and fears, and hopes, and prays, and loves, and adores in the warm, glowing, living, and loving Word of the living God—the divine revelation of glory to God, and salvation to man! And all this comes to us through Him who is both God and man—the Son of God, the Son of man—God manifest in the flesh, God with us! Christianity is thus both doctrine and life—living and loving truth and life.

When man attempts to raise his mind in contemplation to God, the infinite and eternal God, he feels himself as it were struck blind, dumb, and mindless, by the blaze of the great uncreated and unapproachable glory on which he has presumptuously striven to gaze. What have the vain soarings of

his thoughts accomplished? Has he by searching found out God? He stands helpless in the midst of terrible *negations*. The *infinite*, the *incomprehensible*, the *unsearchable*! Can his stunned soul enter into any relation with such unimaginable, abstract, absolute, awful *negations*,—all implying yet hiding a more awful *reality*,—the invisible, yet omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent Jehovah! Smitten and overwhelmed with voiceless terror, man may crouch, and tremble, and try to hide himself, as Adam did, but cannot worship, adore, and love.

But when the benignant beckoning hand of revelation points to the lowly, lovely, smiling *babe* of Bethlehem, and to the simple and humble shepherds worshipping around the manger where He lies,—or to the gentle, thoughtful, holy *youth* of twelve years old sitting in the midst of the grave and learned sages of the temple, hearing them, asking them questions, and returning modest yet wise answers when questioned, then rising in meek obedience to His mother, and accompanying her to her quiet and humble cottage in a rural village,—or to the *man*, who went about doing good, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, restoring to the halt, the maimed, the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the paralytic, the leprous, the healthy use of every limb, and sense, and faculty in pure and renewed integrity, weeping in most full and tender sympathy along with weeping sisters beside the grave of a dead and buried brother, then, with a word of almighty power and mercy, calling the dead to life, yet all the while not having where to rest His own weary head,—or to the *same man* alone in a garden in the deep midnight, prostrate on the ground, groaning out a brief prayer, overwhelmed with agony so intense that every pore sweats blood, and no human heart to heave in sympathizing pity with His unimaginable, infinite woe,—or, finally, hanging on the cross, suspended by His bleeding wounds, His pierced hands and feet, surrounded by a fierce, cruel, exulting, savagely shouting and execrating mob, taunted by a pitiless soldiery, and mocked in the midst of His tortures, yet looking round on His murderers with compassion, and faintly exclaiming, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!” then directing one mild look of deepest, truest love on His heart-wrung sinking mother, consigning her with all but His last breath to the charge of His beloved disciple, then declaring aloud in a voice of triumph the great work “FINISHED,” and

yielding up His soul to His Father and God, "a ransom for many,"—pointing to all this, revelation says, "Man, sinful man, behold your great God and Saviour!"

Can this touch and affect the soul of man? Can this awaken human sympathy? Can this draw the heart to this divine, dying conqueror?—this promised seed of the woman there and thus bruising the serpent's head? Can it fail to conquer enmity by this almighty love? "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," were His own prophetic words of eternal truth. No longer need guilty man couch in abject terror beneath the frown of an angry, and, as he dreads, an immitigable God. For Jehovah is Jesus; and Jehovah-Jesus, the God-Man Mediator, has by this one sacrifice of Himself for ever finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness; and from henceforth "there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus,"—in the Lord our Righteousness. No terrible, abstract, unapproachable negation need now appal the awestruck soul. For now we know God in Christ,—we know the Father in the incarnate Son. We know that He, the Father Almighty, loves us, because He gave His own only, eternal, beloved Son for us, "that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have eternal life." This is what inspired Scripture teaches and displays; thus it proclaims and manifests the glory of God in redeeming love, and thus it secures the salvation of man; and thus it proves its sufficiency and perfection for all the purposes of a divine revelation.

APPENDIX.

I.

INSTINCT, REASON, FAITH.



HERE is one department of the argument from design, which not only is so interesting and conclusive in itself as to deserve somewhat more attention than a mere passing notice, but also furnishes, as I think, a peculiarly instructive analogy, by attending to which we may rise to the very highest regions of thought.¹ I refer to the *instincts of animals*. Instincts are unquestionably of the nature of mental faculties, the knowledge of which instincts we obtain by observation and consciousness; but they are themselves wholly unconnected with any exercise of reason. But they exhibit the most striking proofs of *design*, for they all tend immediately to the preservation or to the comfort of the animals endowed with them. The lower animals possess a far greater variety of instincts, and of a more singular kind, than man, because they are almost or altogether destitute of the higher powers of reason, while man is indebted to reason in almost everything. It would be erroneous to deny that man is endowed with instinct, merely because the predominance of *reason* supersedes instinct in general, especially in the mature life of cultivated minds. In the very earliest stage of human existence we cannot fail to mark the power of instinct, when the infant clings to its mother's bosom, and seeks there, without any previous knowledge of it, the nourishment which nature has provided, even before it can know that food is necessary to sustain life. Other instances of instinct in the human being might be produced, though probably not one more remarkable and conclusive than this.

A large class of instincts relate to food; and in all cases of this class it will be found, that there is a special *adaptation* between the *instinctive desire* and the *corporeal organ* by means of which these desires are gratified. This adaptation includes the *instincts*, the *organs*, and the *external aliment* appropriate to the use of each kind of animal, and even the digestive function, by which the food is assimilated. Nothing affords a more convincing proof of creative wisdom, and of

¹ The substance of this passage is taken from Brougham's *Nat. Theol.* p. 50.

the wonderful adaptation of means to an end—of design in the Creator,—than the diversities of structure necessary to produce this combined result. There is a great diversity of substances for nourishment, a great diversity of organs for the reception of these substances, and an equal diversity of instincts; and all are provided for the same end. There is also in almost all animals an instinct which prompts them to *take care of their young*, and to make provision for them both before and after their birth. This instinct exhibits many varieties, suited to the species of the animal, but is *one* in its general nature, and displays very evident proofs of design in the Creator. There are peculiar animals with peculiar instincts,—such as the *bee*, the *ant*, the *beaver*, the *spider*, the *migratory birds*, the *caterpillar and butterfly insects*,—all of which manifest peculiar adaptation and proof of design. But we select the *bee*, for the sake of extracting the beautiful and accurate statement of its instinct given by Lord Brougham.¹

“The work of bees,” says he, “is among the most remarkable of all facts. The form (of the cell) is in every country the same, the proportions accurately alike, the sizes the very same, to the fraction of a line, go where you will. And the form is proved to be that which the most refined analysis has enabled mathematicians to discover as, of all others, the best adapted for the purposes of saving room, and work, and materials. This discovery was only made about a century ago; nay, the instrument that enabled us to find it out—the *fluxional or differential calculus*—was unknown half a century before that application of its powers. And yet the bee had been for thousands of years, in all countries, unerringly working according to this fixed rule, choosing the same exact angle of 120° for the inclination of the sides of its little room, which every one had for ages known to be the best possible angle; but also choosing the same exact angles of 110° and 70° for the parallelograms of the roof, which no one had discovered till the eighteenth century, when Kœnig solved that most curious problem of *maxima* and *minima*, the means of investigating which had not existed till the century before, when Newton and Leibnitz invented the calculus, whereby such problems can now be easily worked. It is impossible to conceive anything more striking, as a proof of refined skill, than the creation of such instincts.”

Nothing, certainly, can more clearly prove wise adaptation and design, than such instincts; and as the animals and insects endowed with these instincts are *unconscious of them*, the wisdom, the adaptation, the design, can be ascribed only to the Creator Himself.

It is scarcely possible to avoid asking, What is *instinct*? though it may be very difficult to give a perfectly satisfactory answer. Every one, however, admits that instinct is, in the main, to animals what reason is to man,—with this primary difference, that, so far as we can perceive, instinct is not accompanied by consciousness, and cannot therefore have in it either conscious design or morality, while human

¹ *Nat. Theol.* p. 51.

reason has both. Another difference appears when we look at it closely : instinct is as perfect at first as it ever is, and acts with as much precision in the first attempt of the young animal, as it does in the aged, and what we would term experienced. Some have thought that instances of a kind of reasoning may be dimly perceived in certain changes of the common process, which are found in peculiar circumstances where that process would not be suitable. Such changes and new adaptations, if well authenticated, would not, however, be due to the reasoning of the animal, any more than the common adaptation is ; but ought to be ascribed to the very nature and cause of the instinct, which is unconscious adaptation on the part of the animal, but *designed* on the part of the *Creator*. The more minutely we trace the analysis, the more certainly shall we arrive at the same result. Instinct appears to be the mind and design of the Creator working in the animal, as mind does in man, but without the consciousness of the animal itself. This definition we might further illustrate by reference to the well-known peculiarities of instinct, such as those so manifest in the wonderful architectural structures of the bees. Their mechanism is more perfect than anything that man can construct ; and it is constructed in accordance with principles which man's highest mathematical attainments have but recently enabled him to understand. What does this intimate ? It plainly teaches, that the perfect mind of the Creator impelled and guided the unconscious architect, and therefore the structure is perfect. But it also shows that the mind of the Creator, while it works perfectly, yet works in a manner which the mind of man can so far apprehend, and that all nature is in harmony with the mental constitution which it pleased the Creator to give to man. The bee is not a mathematician, for it is unconscious, and cannot reason ; but in the bee we may perceive an embodied prophecy of the conscious, reasoning mathematician, man. A similar course of thought pervades the whole of Hugh Miller's latest and greatest work, in which he not only traces, in the *Testimony of the Rocks*, a great variety of proofs that there is an almost exact analogy between the thinking of God as impressed on the tablets of creation, and the spontaneous thinking of man, when he attempts to produce similar structures ; but also, in the full confidence that such is the case, ventures boldly to term the world itself "*a geological prophecy of man.*"

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of extracting a very beautiful passage from Coleridge,¹ in which he expresses a similar thought. "Let us carry us back in spirit," he says, "to the mysterious week, the teeming work-days of the Creator. And who that watched their ways with an understanding heart, could, as the vision evolving still advanced towards him, contemplate the filial and loyal *bee*, the home-building, wedded, and divorceless *swallow*, and above all, the manifoldly intelligent *ant* tribes, with their commonwealths and confede-

¹ *Aids to Reflection*, vol. i. p. 8 (5th ed.), Pickering.

racies, their warriors and miners, the husband folk that fold in their tiny flocks on the honey-leaf, and the virgin sister, with the holy instincts of maternal love detached and in selfless purity,—and not say in himself, Behold the shadow of approaching humanity, the sun rising from behind in the kindling morn of creation!"

The view which I would wish to suggest, and which appears to me to be the true and peculiarly instructive view, is this: There runs through the entire creation such a universally harmonious analogy as to give, in all its parts, and in the whole, a wonderfully comprehensive indication of the designing mind of the one Creator. In the mind of man there is the intuitive capacity of apprehending the mind of God in creation, by the correspondence with that divine mind with which he has been endowed,—by the image of God within him. The atomic theory shows him that there is designed proportion in the most infinitesimal divisions of matter,—so definitely designed and proportioned as to produce the most complete and unchangeable unity. In the instincts of animals he sees what had appeared as mere physical force in material nature now acting with apparent spontaneity, but still acting unconsciously, although adumbrating in a wonderful manner what *might be* conscious and intelligent rationality. In himself consciousness enables him to perceive the realization of all that he has hitherto beheld in nature. His own senses, especially those of sight, smell, and taste, make him in some degree acquainted with the proportions, qualities, and infinitesimal divisions of physical nature, and of his own intensely sentient being. It tells him also of instincts existing in himself, which swayed him at will in the infancy of his being, and always swayed him right, but which have been overgrown, overshadowed, and superseded by another faculty, reason, which now claims dominion over him.

In this newly discovered and powerful faculty, of which every highest and finest thing in nature was a dim prophecy, he finds some properties which at once surprise and overawe him. It claims supremacy over his actions; it possesses consciousness of what it means to do, and employs the invisible energy, which it terms *Will*, to obey its directions, and perform its commands. It continually busies itself in taking cognisance of all things within its reach,—comparing them, separating them, combining them, and making them also its servants. It possesses the faculty of memory, and can learn from the past, so as to become wise or skilful by experience; and it has also the faculty of prudence, by which it can look forward and make such arrangements as may anticipate the future. All else in nature was indeed but a dim prophecy of this high faculty; but it *was* a prophecy, foretelling and anticipating man and reason, and all combining to constitute man the sovereign of this world in which he dwells.

But what *is* reason? We have found instinct apparently to be the mind of the Creator acting *in* the animal, but without the consciousness of the animal itself. May we not say that reason also

appears to be the mind of the Creator acting in man, *with the consciousness of man himself?* By analogy we might be induced to give this answer; but it would be a defective, and consequently a fallacious, analogy. It might lead us into a species of pantheism, if not into a Hegelian humanism. But we must render our analysis more exact, and thereby find out a more true analogy, or rather find out what it is which must be, and yet to which no analogy can fully lead us. When we observe closely the gradations of nature, we perceive, that in each successive rising of the scale some new principle is added, which distinguishes the new gradation from all by which it was preceded. But while it thus rises into a higher rank in the scale of being, by means of this new principle, it also retains, but at the same time elevates, all that it holds in common with the lower grades of nature. *Vegetable life* retains all the atomic proportions of nature, but holds all their decomposing properties and forces suspended from their common action in its vital grasp, and imparts to them an elevation into its vitality. *Animal life* does the same, even to the vegetable life, which it uses for its nutriment. *Instinct* is now added by the Creator to the animal life, and it acts, unconsciously, like a creator, by constructing fabrics of its own; yet this instinct is not reason, for it has no consciousness, and cannot learn. It is not, then, the mind of God acting in the animal, but the Creator giving instinct to the animal,—which acts in it with all the perfect precision with which physical force acts in matter, and vitality acts in animated creatures. The element which seemed to unite, or rather confound, God with nature is thus excluded; and pantheism is proved to have no basis. The mind of God is not interfused throughout all nature, as its life, as “the soul of the universe,” to use the language of the pantheist; but the Creator, remaining in His own holy essence apart from the creation, gives it such powers—*inorganic, organic, vital, or instinctive*—as seem good to Him, and by them rules it, raising it at the same time, through successive stages, into a condition fitting it to receive that highest organized creature, *man*, in whom all previous creation should be consummated, and whom He meant to endow with a *rational soul, moral, spiritual—the image of Himself*. In rational man, thus constituted the image of God, there must be that highest mental faculty, whose distinctive function it is to perceive moral distinctions, to know good from evil, right from wrong, that he may consciously and willingly act in accordance with these distinctions, by believing that they are true distinctions; and that it is his duty to obey his ruling moral faculty, without demanding anything more than the knowledge of its dictates.

This elevates reason into the region of faith. Let us follow it into that region, and see what *now* is its condition. While we have termed this new region and new element the region and element of *faith*, we mean this term to be understood at present in a sense quite distinct from that which it bears in revealed theology, although it be a

kindred sense. We have mentioned the introduction of the moral faculty into the human mind, with its essentially distinctive idea, the idea of duty, and the rightful supremacy which this implies. Reason may still take cognisance of everything which comes within its sphere, and may not only conclude that the thing before it is desirable, but may also put forth *will*, in order to procure it. At that instant of *time* and *thought*, *desire* and *will*, the *moral faculty* interposes with its dictate, and pronounces the *object*, the *desire*, the *will*, the *whole mental state*, *right* or *wrong*, with its encouragement or imperative prohibition. We may still feel the emotion of *desire*; and reason may ask *why* the moral faculty thus prohibits the gratification of it. But the moral faculty may refuse to answer,—may not even be able to give such an answer as would satisfy reason. Yet if man have confidence or *faith* in his own *moral* nature,—faith in the truth and rectitude of its dictates, and faith in his Creator,—faith that God has given him a moral nature which truly perceives what is right, as certainly as his sensational nature can perceive what exists,—he will obey the dictate of the moral faculty, even though it give no answer to his inquiry. This confidence or faith in his own moral nature, and in the moral perfection of God, is not only *reasonable*, but it is what reason itself may see to be the only becoming relation in which it can rightly stand to the moral faculty. For if reason were to assume the power of deciding the point itself, it could never do so, except on the always uncertain and questionable ground of *expediency*, or, perhaps, the shuffling ground of *compromise*,—neither of which might be *right*, and both of which might ultimately issue in *wrong* and *evil*. Reason *ought not* to ask *why*. The moral faculty should not give any reply. Faith in the moral faculty should produce obedience; and this would be the highest natural position and duty of right reason.

It will be readily perceived how perfectly this view agrees with the conduct of a wise and good parent in the training of his children. He at once assumes, as his right, authority to command, requiring from his child the direct duty of obedience; but he does not always state to his child the reason of the command. In many instances it may not be possible for the child to understand that reason; but even if it were, and when it is, it would not generally be wise to give it, because the child would not be taught obedience to paternal authority, since its conduct was not regulated by that principle, but by its own reason, as the ultimate rule. Should the child ask, "Why should I do this?" the right answer would be, "Because I desire it; and because you ought to place confidence in me, that I will not bid you do anything but what is right and good." The child might still say, "But it is unpleasant; it is painful." The answer still is, "It is right for you to obey me, in the meantime, and to believe that I would not expose you to anything distressing, if it were not for your good. Trust in me; place faith in me; the time will come when you will understand the reason." This would be wise and good training for a child;

but it requires the child to exercise the faculty of faith where reason neither can nor ought to judge. In like manner, there is much in this our present state which requires a similar training, and demands the exercise of the same principle, faith. There are many external circumstances and events which perplex our reason, and would almost lead us to doubt the existence of a moral government in the world. Still conscience, the moral faculty, utters its imperative command to do good and abstain from evil, whatever others may do, and whatever may be the consequences to ourselves. Shall we obey its dictates? Yes; if we have faith in our own moral nature, and faith in our Creator. The whole may be for our training. This world may be a place of discipline,—this life a state of *probation*. Should this be the case—and we cannot say it is not,—then the wisest, safest, highest exercise of right reason will be, to exercise unhesitating faith in our own moral nature, and in the moral perfection of God, and to obey the moral faculty.

Let us again glance at the analogy which has proved to us, hitherto at least, a suggestive guide. We have traced throughout all creation arrangements of which creation itself could not be conscious, and to which, therefore, it could not have given rise; yet in all of them we have traced ample proofs of wise and intelligent *design*. This we can ascribe only to the Creator. But we have also traced the presence of *power*, in the physical forces that characterize the invisible and imponderable elements, and the atomic relations of nature; and these we have designated by the term Law. But the word law implies *mind*, as appears whenever we think of human law, which has no substantive existence of its own, but is merely the *mode* in which the aggregate mind of man puts forth its powers. By the laws of nature, therefore, we ought also to understand, not any substantive existence in nature,—anything which might be called *unconscious intelligence*,—but the *mode* in which the Creator puts forth His power, equally in creation and in government. All the laws of physical force, all the laws of vegetable and animal life, all the laws of instinct, all the laws of human reason, according to this wide analogy, may be regarded as truly the *modes* according to which the Creator has constructed, and governs, the world.

Are we once more apparently on the brink of a species of pantheism? To some it may almost seem so; but we are not in any real danger of plunging into that abyss. We have noticed the remarkable fact, that every new element, grade, and power in nature can draw up into its own region whatever it requires from the lower elements and powers, and hold their special action suspended, so far as it has assimilated them to itself; but also, that it does not owe its own higher element to any or all that previously existed in them. *That* was conferred directly by the Creator. The higher life or organization has its own higher law; and this higher law holds in suspension all the lower laws, so long as it retains its own peculiar existence. The

law of vegetable life holds in suspension all the chemical laws; the law of animal life holds in suspension both vegetable life and chemical laws; and the law of instinct uses all other existences as it needs them, in forming the structures to which it is determined by its own law. In all such cases, the very fact that the higher law absorbs and suspends all lower laws, proves that it was *not the product of them*, but the distinct creation of a new and advanced power in nature, by the will and act of the Divine Author of nature.

There is yet one thought which our analogy, and even our analysis, may seem legitimately to introduce. The cessation of any superior law allows the inferior laws to resume immediately their suspended action; and this action immediately begins to decompose the structure which that superior law had framed. This is best seen in cases where the superior law is *life*. No sooner does vegetable life cease to exist, than the chemical laws resume their operation, and decompose the plant, resolving it into its original elements. No sooner does animal life cease, than a similar effect takes place,—the composite structure is decomposed by the chemical laws, and even vegetable life luxuriates in and over its remains. This cessation of life is termed *death*; but it is the death of only the superior law of life, not the destruction of the physical materials combined in the living structure. Is, then, death and dissolution the inevitable and universal destiny of every composite structure? “It is, and must be so,” say the men of physical science; and so far as our investigation has yet proceeded, we have not found anything to the contrary. We have, however, found that every new higher law of superior life and being can and does suspend all the lower, and that they cannot resume their operations till the death of that superior law and life. But the highest law with which we are acquainted in nature, is the law of *moral life* in *man*, who is the only moral being possessing a physical structure, so far as our sphere of knowledge extends. And as we have in every other instance found, that the highest law always suspends the operation of all the lower laws, so long as it retains its own vitality, are we not warranted to conclude, that so long as the law of *moral life* remained unimpaired and undestroyed, it would have held all lower laws in completely subjugated suspension, so that even the bodily frame of man could never have been subject to death?

Let us examine this thought as closely and carefully as we possibly can. The superior law suspends all the lower, so long as it fully retains its own vitality and power; but when that vitality ceases, the lower laws resume their function, and decompose the composite structure into its original elements; and the cessation of that higher law, in the case of all animated organization, is *death*. Does not this imply, that these lower laws had retained their nature and tendency, even while absorbed and suspended by the higher law, and had maintained a latent struggle against it all the while? Does it not also imply, that this struggle is the unperceived cause of what we term

age, decay, and, ultimately, death, in the complex being? Does it not further imply, that the constant tendency of the lower nature is to resist the control of the higher? and that the constant danger of the higher is, that it yield to the lower, cease to struggle against it, sink into degradation, and die? And may not this analysis suggest, in its ultimate stage, that the primary dynamic forces of nature are all divulsive, and not organific, and could never, therefore, of themselves, and by their own action, produce any kind of organization, far less life, which it seems to be their constant tendency to destroy? Do not *light*, *electricity*, *magnetism*, all radiate, all tend to speed away from any centre, and to scatter and disperse everything that resists their force, if not held in check by the counterpoising force, *gravitation*,—which, in its turn, tends to crush all material being into impenetrable density?

None of these physical powers or forces, then, tend in even the least degree to produce organization, far less life. But there *is* life; and that life necessarily declares a living Creator. Everything in material nature tends to death; and nothing in material nature is able long to resist the *divulsive*, or *compressive*, and life-destroying tendencies of nature's primary forces. If anything can be material, and yet resist continuously these death-causing potencies, it must be one which has obtained some portion of a nature allied to that of the Creator Himself. But His nature is *moral and spiritual mind*. To man also has been given moral and spiritual mind; and that *moral law* which has both the right and the power to hold in suspended action all the lower laws that stand related to his physical nature, is the highest law of his being, and must secure to him a perpetuity of life, so long as it maintains its own vitality and rightful supremacy over his whole nature.

Now, is there anything in the nature of this *moral law* that should tend to abate its vitality and power? We have seen that the lower never tends to produce the higher, but rather to drag it down, degrade, and destroy it. Geology shows us that this "law of degradation" was at work throughout all the ages of all the ancient creations, and that death reigned over them all. Since, then, no lower nature ever did or could produce the higher,—since the fancied law of development is only a fallacy and a fable,—we may very safely conclude, that physical nature did not produce, and could not produce, *mind* and *moral nature*. Every act of creative power is manifested by something superinduced upon, transfused throughout, and governing the lower nature, but never developed out of it, or produced by it. Yet nothing is ever destroyed; and the forces given to, or interfused throughout, even the atoms of inorganic matter, are but suspended by the new and superior law or power, ready to act according to their primary functions, whenever they can obtain release. They do not enter into the moral being and nature of man. They cannot either begin or carry on any struggle in that high

region. They may indeed give occasion to it to put forth its superior powers in guiding and controlling them; but this would only tend to increase the knowledge, the reasoning faculties, and the moral habits of man, by the exercise of these high powers. In every other kind of life, the lower have been drawn up into the region of the higher, and therefore can maintain a struggle within it. The lower physical laws have been drawn up into man's animal and material life; but not into his moral life—not into his non-material and spiritual mind. There cannot, therefore, be any natural tendency in that high region arising from them, as existing in it, though held in suspension and under control,—for they are not *in it*, though in man's lower and physical nature; there cannot be in the moral nature and rational mind of man any natural tendency to grow aged, to decay, to die,—for his moral nature, his rational mind, is a new creation superinduced upon his physical nature, and differing from it not merely in *degree*, but in *kind*. It may seem, therefore, that this new moral nature of man ought by its very nature to be necessarily above the reach of death, unless some *moral* and *spiritual* enemy could invade, subdue, and destroy *moral life itself*.

To this, we are persuaded, a true, full, and even cautious analogy seems clearly to lead. But what could invade and destroy moral life? Only the violation of the moral principle,—the violation of duty to God. The violation of duty to God is *sin*; *sin*, therefore, is *death to moral law and moral life*, and would necessarily be followed by death to man. How wonderfully does this result, at which we have arrived by the aid of clear analogy and strict analysis, agree with the emphatic declaration of Scripture! “The wages of sin is death.” “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” And how necessary, in order to maintain the moral life of a moral and rational being, such as man, that he may not fall into the power of the lower impulses and laws of his own physical nature, and of the physical world beneath and around him, by disobeying the high *moral law of his nature*, which is the principle of faith in the dictates of his own moral nature, and faith in the moral perfection of his Creator,—faith which may thus enlighten his reason and instruct his will, and keep him steadily obedient to his conscience!

Why should men attempt to produce a seeming conflict between faith and reason? There is not in reality any such conflict. There cannot indeed be, if both were rightly understood. There is an element of faith in every region of the mind. At the basis of all physical science lie those axioms, which no man can prove, but which every man must believe, otherwise he cannot even begin the study of science. How does he receive them? By means of an immediate intellectual intuition, which may very appropriately be called *intellectual faith*. There is a similar element in the high region of duty. Men have in vain attempted to frame theories of *duty* within the sphere of *reason*. All such attempts are necessarily abortive. Take,

for example, the utilitarian theory of duty. It may look plausible enough to state, that as everything which is right will be found to be also useful in the long run, therefore the criterion of rightness is usefulness. "*In the long run*,"—well, but how *long* must matters *run* before the usefulness may appear? Many a thing may seem useful *now*, which will prove injurious "in the long run;" and many a thing may appear injurious now, which will afterwards prove to be highly beneficial. But I cannot wait for the remote proof. I am required to decide and act *now*—this very instant,—and *must* do so, without any such criterion as the remote future might afford. What, then, do I most urgently need? I need the immediate decision of a moral faculty, which has the whole sphere of duty under its control, which has the right to give an imperative command, and in the rightness of which command I ought to place unlimited confidence—implicit faith. Is this contrary to reason? Why, it is the very highest act of reason; for it is in perfect harmony with all else that reason rationally does. Reason tells me to believe the intimations which my senses give me of the external world; and if I do not, I become a purblind, miserable sceptic, who must perforce obey where he professes not to believe, and who thus loses reason and freedom both, and becomes the slave of these doubted senses and that disputed world. Reason tells me to believe those axiomatic truths to which intellectual faith assents; and if I refuse to do so, science is to me impossible, and I must pass my grovelling life in mental darkness, groping in blank bewilderment among mighty human achievements, which are to me as incomprehensible as if I were destitute of rationality. Reason may surely be allowed also to tell me to believe in the direct dictates of my own moral faculty; and if I refuse to do so, I become the victim of that dark tumultuary sea of doubts through which my perilous and benighted voyage lies, never knowing what I *ought* to do, or when to do it, till I perish in the midst of its wild and gloomy billows. I *must*, then, have—I cannot do without—the principle of *faith*;—faith in the intimations which I receive from my wondrously organized body,—faith in the laws and convictions of my own mental constitution,—faith in the nature and dictates of my moral faculty,—and faith in the Divine Creator and moral Governor of them all, "in whom I live, and move, and have my being."

To all this,—in which the highest reason must and will concur, unless prejudiced by sin, wilfully blind, half dead already,—to all this must be added *revelation*; and then faith in revealed truth becomes a true *spiritual faith*,—the *element of true religion*, receiving what the HOLY SPIRIT teaches, and worshipping with filial confidence the GOD and GIVER of all true life—our GREAT GOD and SAVIOUR. This is the highest possible reason, and the truest possible faith, in full, and holy, and eternal union, and eternal life,—not pantheistic, but true union with the PRINCE OF LIFE, the DIVINE REDEEMER, the GOD-MAN MEDIATOR!

II.

SCEPTICISM, RATIONALISM, HUMANISM.



WE have already given some explanation of the terms *subjective* and *objective*, with the related terms *idea* and *reality*. To these let us add the terms *phenomenon* and *noumenon*, explaining these latter terms, to the following effect :—

The term *phenomenon* is employed to designate that which appears ; the term *noumenon* to designate either a *substance*, where we perceive a *quality* ; or a *cause*, where we perceive a *change*. Both *quality* and *change* are *phenomenal* ; *substance* and *cause* are *noumenal*. These terms are the correlatives of each other ; and may be thus arranged :

Subjective, Idea, Phenomenon,
with the correlatives, *Objective, Reality, Noumenon.*

Man, contemplating the universe for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, calls himself the *subject*, and the universe the *object*. The intellect *operating* is always *subjective*. But these terms are *relative*, not *absolute* ; and if the relation be changed, so also ought the term to be, otherwise there must a fallacy take place. If instead of continuing to contemplate the universe, or things external, a man should begin to contemplate his own *knowledge* or *thought*, and still call it *subjective*, he would that moment introduce a fallacy, for the knowledge or thought had become *objective* by being contemplated. But he may not be intelligently aware of the great change which has taken place, and may go on applying to the *knowledge* now rendered *objective* the laws of operating thought—the laws of the *subjective* mind ; and if so, his whole course of reasoning must be fallacious, and he must arrive at an erroneous conclusion. He imagines that he is inquiring into the nature of the *subjective*, which he has unconsciously made *objective* ; and he finds that all *noumena* have become *phenomena*, and that he cannot obtain certainty in anything. He concludes, therefore, that certainty is not attainable—that all around him and within him are alike flitting appearances ; and he becomes a sceptic.

It ought to be carefully distinguished and borne in mind, that all our knowledge may be arranged into two divisions, *scientific* and *philosophical*. Science is the link uniting the *reason* of *man* to the *phenomena* of *nature*. Science is the region of direct and spontaneous knowledge,—it teaches us what is *true*. Philosophy is the kingdom of indirect and reflective knowledge, and it teaches us what *form* know-

ledge takes, and what it *contains*. The *object* of science is *nature*, both physical and mental; the object of philosophy is *thought*. The problem of science is this: To human sense and human reason let there be given the universe as it appears,—to find what is in that universe, with the conditions, relations, actions, and reactions of the various parts.

The problem of philosophy is this: To human reason let there be given the whole scheme of science,—to find what thoughts man has employed, what methods he has pursued, and what is the final summation of man's possible knowledge on earth. Viewed in this light, philosophy is the ultimate generalization of science, the subjection of knowledge to laws; as science is the subjection of the phenomena of nature to laws.

Let the question now be asked, *How* does the human mind view the phenomenal universe? In all human language we find *three forms* under which man views the universe,—*first*, as *existing*, expressed by the substantive verb, *to be*. *Second*, in the *form, mode, or condition* of its existence,—*to have qualities*. *Third*, in its *function*, including action and reaction, expressed by the *active verb*. In the external we perceive *matter*—the *conditions* of matter—and the *motions, actions, and reactions* of matter. On this objective world the mind acts in three correlated ways; and to existence, condition, and function it adds, nomenclature, classification, and reasoning. Now, when looking at any external object with a dynamic function, that is, exhibiting action and reaction, we necessarily divide it into *substance* and *attribute*. But scepticism affirms that we know only the *attribute*, or *phenomenal quality*, but not the *substance*—the condition and effect, but not the cause. Philosophic scepticism admits the reality of phenomena, in so far as they are phenomena *experienced by us*, but denies that we have any criterion for determining whether there be or be not anything external to our own impressions. This it does, by the transposition to which we have already directed attention—by fallaciously reducing the objective to the subjective, and thus bringing the conceptions of the objective under the conditions of the subjective, and converting all *noumena* and all *reality* into the *phenomenal* and the *ideal*.

It must, I think, be obvious, that when we make the mind itself or its thoughts *objective*, we can perceive nothing but what is relative to us,—relative knowledge, and not absolute truth. In such a case, to speak of a criterion of truth, would be to speak of a *subjective criterion*, which of necessity could tell us nothing of *objective truth*. Now, this is precisely what the sceptic does, either designedly or fallaciously; and what to a very large extent is done by modern subjective philosophy. The objective and the subjective have been confusedly mixed up together, and then the laws of the subjective have been improperly applied to the whole of our knowledge, so as to resolve it all into the merely phenomenal,—into “impressions and

ideas," to use the language of Hume ; into *abstract subjective thought*, say others ; into *speculative reason*, say others ; into *the thinking me*, say others.

The kind of philosophy which proceeds exclusively from the position of sensation and perception, and allows the perception, or law of thought, to determine the whole, must end in the idealism of Berkeley. The kind which assumes human knowledge to be as Berkeley left it, must inevitably be brought under the power of the scepticism of Hume. The far higher philosophy of Kant may lead to nothing higher than the laws of abstract thought, and end in mere abstractions, if it leave out, as his followers did, the region of the moral nature of man. In one department, we may regard Kant's philosophy as completely setting Hume's scepticism aside, although not adequately establishing its own higher truths. The philosophy of Reid, especially as expounded and applied by Sir William Hamilton, has entirely driven both the elder idealism and the elder scepticism of the last century off the field of present thought ; but it will require to be not only supplemented, but altered, in some very important points ; and towards this desirable result some steps have been already taken by various philosophical thinkers.

The modern subjective philosophy, with its special tendencies to scepticism, will find ere long its complete refutation. That refutation, I am persuaded, will necessarily begin, by pointing out the very fallacy to which our attention has been directed, namely, the conversion, designed or undesigned, of the objective to the subjective, and the application to the truly objective of the laws which specially belong only to the subjective. For it cannot surely be far remote, in an age of thinkers, when men will clearly perceive that philosophy, being in reality nothing else than the science of human thought, can teach us nothing about external nature ; and if it finds in the human mind certain fixed and ineradicable thoughts, which have been produced by the mind's contact with nature, must take them into account as it finds them, and must admit, that to do otherwise, would be unphilosophical.

Some notice has already been taken of that fallacious position assumed by scepticism, when it assumes that no man can prove his own objective existence, because all knowledge is merely *phenomenal*. "I will prove," the sceptic says, "that you do not exist ; you are only a phenomenon of *my* thinking." Assuming his own position, we might answer, "You will prove ! why *you* are only a phenomenon of *my own* thinking !" What can he reply ? Nothing, from his position ; for it was himself that furnished the argument for his own annihilation. But it may be, that the sceptic formed his sophism, by adhering too closely to his own self-consciousness, which of course could not tell him anything directly about any other man's existence. But, taking other men into account, the absurdity of his sophism is immediately perceived ; and he must own, that even in

addressing another man, he not only assumes his own existence, but grants that of the other man, and consequently refutes himself in the very utterance of his argument. It has also been shown that men can arrive at a knowledge of more than phenomena, even in the physical world. They can and do attain to the knowledge of *efficient causes*, in the science of dynamics, in physical astronomy, and in mechanics. Some, indeed, still avoid the terms *cause* and *power*, and substitute the term *physical force*; but in that compound term they are constrained to include all that we mean by power and cause—*efficient cause*. It may be added, however, that only the empirical man of science, or the speculative metaphysician, are now found denying the ability of man to apprehend causes. The highest thinking men of science, and the true comprehensive philosopher, both admit the principle of causation, and man's knowledge of that principle, as might easily be proved by reference to their works. We shall refer to but two of the philosophers. Reid says, "It is very probable that the very conception or idea of active power and of efficient causes is derived from our voluntary efforts in producing effects." Sir W. Hamilton adds, "It is true, however, that the consciousness of our own efficiency illuminates the dark notion of causality, founded, as I conceive, in our impotence to conceive the possibility of an absolute commencement, and raises it from the vague and negative into the precise and positive notion of power." But the impossibility of conceiving an absolute commencement is, in other words, the impossibility of conceiving of an *effect without a cause*, which is just the principle of causality. This is precisely the same thing which we have already termed a primary and intuitive belief, that every effect must have a cause. But it is well to find that the highest philosophy must admit this. We feel inclined to add, that since all the created universe is an effect, of which God is the cause; and since man is the synthesis of created mind and matter, he is by his constitution the very creature by whom the principle of causality should be most readily apprehended, and the idea of power entertained. For the same reason, although he cannot produce new power, and ought always to ascribe all absolute power to God, he can ascertain what powers exist, employ them according to their kinds, and become thus the interpreter of nature in glorifying God, and the delegated sovereign of this world. This would be at once true philosophy and true religion.

When the modern subjective philosophy takes higher ground than that which ends in shadowy and self-confuting scepticism, and pursues its still wayward flight into the regions exclusively of the speculative reason, it may produce, and has produced, the vague, wild rationalism which has so long afflicted the mind of Germany. For since it refuses to admit anything which is not within the region and government of the subjective, and yet finds many a thing believed by man for which the subjective will not account, the alternative

presents itself,—either to admit that subjective philosophy cannot account for all that is in the mind,—which would be to acknowledge its own inadequacy, and to abandon its proud pretensions,—or, to set about explaining away all that it finds itself unable to account for. It has chosen the latter member of the alternative, and has very busily, but very inefficiently, employed itself in framing evasive explanations, which it is very difficult to suppose that those who fabricated them, could themselves in any measure believe. This has been the case especially in the sphere of religious belief, and with reference to the historical, prophetic, and miraculous narratives of the Bible. So far as there is any philosophy in the objections of rationalism, or in rationalism itself, it may be enough to say, that all which a true philosophy has to do with any mental fact—and every thought and belief is a mental fact—is to ascertain what is its true nature and place among other mental facts. It does not belong to the province of subjective philosophy to tell how it came there, or to determine anything else about it but the fact that there it is. Any other course is entirely unphilosophical; therefore rationalism is entirely unphilosophical. We shall have to deal with the question, How came the belief, this mental fact, to have and to hold so secure a position among the other mental facts of whose existence we are conscious? and we shall then have to examine the evidences on which it rests. This the rationalist has never fairly done, and dares not fairly attempt, as he ought to do, if he be disposed to use his boasted reason fairly. If not, we may term his conduct not only unphilosophical, but also unreasonable, not to employ a severer term which might more fully describe it.

When Hegel declared that “the idea of God is that of a logical process of thought, ever unfolding itself, but never unfolded,—a dialectic movement rather than a Divine Being, which realizes itself, and reaches a state of self-consciousness in man,”—he gave utterance to a dogma which cannot mean anything else than the deification of human nature, and to which we would give the designation Humanism. To this the trite saying, “extremes meet,” may well be applied. The mystic Hindu devotee maintains that it is possible for a true holder of his belief to reach, by untold years spent in deep and abstract contemplation, the sublime position at last of being able to say, “*I am Brahm*,” and thereby to become instantly divine. The modern subjective philosopher, by his abstract contemplations, arrives also at the sublime height of being able to say, “*God has reached a state of self-consciousness in me*.” If we do not call this the height of blasphemy in poor Hegel any more than in the poor Hindu devotee, it is because we regard it as the height of insanity to which poor human nature has wildly soared, or the depth of folly into which it has plunged, in its utter and helpless godlessness. In the case of the Hindu devotee we might pity the blindness of a fellow-creature on whom the light of revelation had never shone, and whose deep

mental darkness was therefore a cause of commiseration. But in the case of an educated European of the present age, we are almost compelled to take a darker and a sadder view. The Bible was within Hegel's reach, though he probably never perused it; and he cannot be acquitted of wilful ignorance, at the least. But it is not for us to pronounce any sentence on our fellow-man: we turn, therefore, from the painful and mournful subject in silent sorrow.

What we have termed humanism, however, must engage our attention a little further. It is not only essentially identical with the extreme fanaticism of the Hindu mystic, but it is also very closely allied to the same mental human theism which, in ancient times, peopled the celestial abodes with human demigods. It is even now giving rise to the absurdly fantastical idea of *hero-worship*. Nor is this a merely fantastical theory, or a merely literary theory, which may serve as an imaginary chain wherewith to link together a series of highly wrought biographical narratives of distinguished men, as has been done by Thomas Carlyle, and by Ralph Waldo Emerson; but it is pervaded by a deeper design, as appears from the strong declarations of some of these hero-worshippers, to the effect, that Christianity is now an *effete* or worn-out theory,—has lost all religious vitality,—is not suited to the religious consciousness of the nineteenth century,—and must be superseded by some new religion more adapted to the spirit of the age. And what can be more suited to the “spirit of the age” than hero-worship? For hero-worship does not demand that the hero shall be morally better than other men, but that he be more distinguished; that he be greater, more powerful, more energetic, more wilful, more able in some way to mould and use the minds of other men. This is enough; and it matters not whether he be a patriot or a tyrant,—a philanthropist or a man-slayer,—a Washington or a Napoleon,—a Howard or a Borgia,—a Pope Gregory or a John Knox,—let him only be a man of resolute will and power, and he will serve humanism for a god. Let him be a “*true man*,” as Carlyle would say,—let him have a real faith, and act upon it: that is enough for hero-worship. Carlyle has himself realized this theory in his writings; for his worship of John Knox is not one whit more warm than his worship of Mohammed. And if what fame reports be true, we may expect ere long to find that his worship of Cromwell has been transferred with equal earnestness to Frederick of Prussia,—perhaps to Voltaire.

It will easily be seen that this theory of humanism, and its kindred theory, hero-worship, necessarily excludes all reference to moral distinctions. This was to be expected, considering its origin; but it deserves to be noticed carefully, that we may know its real nature, and not be misled by its pretensions. Its real origin is to be found in the ideal pantheism of Fichte and Schelling, still clinging to the subjective in philosophy, and transmuted by Hegel into humanism, but still retaining its pantheistic form, and rendered, if

possible, more unintelligible than before by the uncouth phraseology of Carlyle, with its "dark abysmal depths" and its "old eternities." It has not, and it cannot have, any real moral distinctions or moral virtues, or even social virtues; for its god is man, or, rather, every man is his own god; and his measure of deification consists in his measure of will and power, and in his absolute freedom from all sense of responsibility, and all regard for his fellow-man. It is man, in his selfism or individualism, become his own god. Its grim British hierophant proclaims its merciless character in his own way, when, after speaking contemptuously of the miserable thousands who fester and die, rather than dwell in the garrets and cellars of the huge metropolis, he proposes to get rid of these dregs of humanity, by "throwing them into the dustbin,"—"by shooting them over London Bridge." Such are the tender mercies of humanism and hero-worship, as expressed in the choice language of the most distinguished apostle of the new religion proposed for our adoption in the present age!

It was my intention to have given in this lecture some account of the modern, partly sceptical, partly atheistical, theory, called by its adherents Secularism. The nature of that modern phase of unbelief is closely allied to that of the humanism of the Continent, not the fierce mockery in which Carlyle indulges. It is also sceptical, without idealism, so that it contains a large infusion of materialistic pantheism. In the hands of Germans it would inevitably become materialistic pantheism; but the strongly practical tendency of the British mind constrains it to keep in close contact with the business of man, and the realities of human life. Its pretensions are abundantly high; but its arguments are quite as baseless and as feeble as are any of those which we have been examining. I cannot at present enter into any investigation of its pretensions and assertions; but another opportunity may occur when that may be suitably done. In the meantime, it seems right to say this much, that if you can answer and refute the common arguments of scepticism, you cannot have much difficulty in meeting secularism. Only let this be well observed, that while scepticism has nothing to present interesting or attractive to the practical mind, secularism, on the contrary, derives all its plausibility and much of its strength from its assertion, that, finding the impracticability of arriving at any certainty regarding a future state, it thinks the prudent course for man to adopt is, to make the best use he can of the present world, and leave futurity in its impenetrable darkness, as not having any real practical bearing on human welfare. The fallaciousness of this conclusion may be easily shown; but a very practical refutation of secularism would be, if all men who believe the gospel would do their utmost to show that their strong desire to promote man's *spiritual welfare* does not tend to make them less earnest and active, in their endeavour to promote his *temporal condition*.

III.

PANTHEISM, MATERIALISTIC AND IDEALISTIC.



PANTHEISM may be defined to be "an attempt of the human mind to frame a theory of the universe, so as to comprehend and explain God and nature in one proposition which shall include both." This comprehensive proposition it has always sought to frame, by *identifying God and nature*. In this attempt it either seeks to make nature God, which is *materialistic pantheism*, or to make God nature, which is *idealistic pantheism*. In either case, there is the same attempt to *identify God and nature*,—which is *practical atheism*.

Pantheism had undoubtedly its origin in the East, and that, too, in very ancient times. It sprang, probably, from an attempt made by a spurious metaphysical philosophy to defend the very earliest form of false religion, the worship of nature. In this form it pervades the entire religion of ancient Egypt, as might easily be shown. But in India it acquired its most complete development, where the primal deity, *Brahm*, is regarded as the first and only substance—*infinite, absolute, and indeterminate being*,—from which all is evolved, manifested, developed, and to which all returns and is reabsorbed, at the end of each great age. This is *emanation*, and necessarily excludes the idea of *creation*. The ancient Orphic hymns, and the doctrines which they embodied, had their source in the same theory of *emanation*. The most ancient cosmogonies of Greece betray the same origin, though modified by the peculiar genius of that highly intellectual people. Even in the writings of both Plato and other philosophers the influence of the same thought can be traced; and it flourished luxuriantly among the neo-Platonists of Alexandria.

The reappearance of pantheism in modern times is due to Spinoza and the influence of his writings. This remarkable man gave to the world, or left behind him, a system, partly theological, partly philosophical, more complete and closely reasoned than had ever before been produced. It seems to commence with axioms, then it gives very scientific-looking definitions, then it proceeds in the most exact and closely reasoned logical manner, and it ends in conclusions absolutely pantheistic, but also materialistic. Spinoza asserts that the entire system of being consists only of *three elements*,—*substance, attributes, and modes*. According to him, *substance is being*—absolute being,—which in its plentitude comprehends all existences that can be

conceived without the concept of any other thing, and without which no other thing can either exist, or be conceived. By an "*attribute*" he means, not substance, but a *manifestation of substance*, yet such a manifestation as belongs to its very essence; and by a "*mode*" he means an *affection of substance*, or that which exists in another thing, and is conceived by means of that thing.

This *substance* of which he speaks, he terms *god*; but by this sacred term he only means absolute being, self-existent substance, whose known *attributes* are *thought* and *extension*, and whose affections or "*modes*" comprehend all the varieties of finite existence. In short, nature is God, according to this system, for every possible existence may be included under the twofold expression of "*natura naturans*," and "*natura naturata*." There is but one substance, appearing only in different aspects,—as cause and effect, as substance and mode, as infinite and yet finite, as one and yet many, as ever the same and yet infinitely variable. Though Spinoza uses the word *god*, he allows neither will, nor law, nor moral character, nor personality to God, and, consequently, none of these to man. The system of Spinoza is absolute materialistic pantheism.

It has often been said, that if you grant to Spinoza his first principles or postulates, you will find it impossible to resist his conclusions, so firm and irresistible is his logic. His system bears a close resemblance to *à priori* reasoning, but only a resemblance. In true *à priori* reasoning the argument must begin from some principle so truly axiomatic as to be self-evident, so that it does not need to be proved, and cannot be denied. But Spinoza's argument begins with *definitions*, not axioms; and not only are they mere definitions, but arbitrary definitions, every one of which could be denied, and needs to be proved, which he does not attempt to do, and could not have done. This is not only his primary fallacy, but it pervades and vitiates the whole system. By some of the followers of Spinoza, the materialism of the system becomes more evident, and more offensive, than it ever was in his hands. "Man," says one of them, "has his place in natural history; his nature does not essentially differ from that of the lower animals. Mind is the consequence or product of the material man. Its highest object seems to be, a sense of the infinite and abstract power—the inherent force and principle of nature." Than this it is impossible to conceive of anything more repulsively degrading; yet these sentences are quoted from a work by two British authors,—one of them a woman. This, however, seems to be the legitimate conclusion from the theory of Spinoza, carried to its extreme result; and is perhaps not strange in an age that can believe in phrenology and phreno-mesmerism, and in persons who, deeming themselves philosophers, fancy they can hold, that nothing exists in the universe except *matter and its laws*,¹ that *mind* is the

¹ It were well if men would take the trouble to define the terms which they employ. When they say, "*matter and its laws*," one would like to ask what

product of material organization, and that all the phenomena of thought, of feeling, of conscience, and even of religion, may be accounted for by ascribing them to certain powers inherent in matter, and evolved by certain peculiarities of cerebral structure.

We turn now to *idealistic pantheism*. It may be mentioned, at the very outset, that the idealistic form of pantheism is that which it assumes in Hindu mythology; but there is no reason to think that continental philosophers derived their theory from that source. When we recall to mind, that in the system of Spinoza the two "attributes" of *extension* and *thought* are equally recognised and employed in connection with his doctrine of *one substance*, we may readily perceive that his system bore a twofold aspect, and could be pursued in two different lines of investigation by his followers. It seemed to have two poles; and men might turn their attention to either the one or the other of them, under the desire for simplification, and according to their own natural bias. Those who were addicted to the *sensational school of philosophy*, would prosecute the notion of *extension*, and end in *materialism*, as we have seen. But those who were more disposed to soar into the regions of *thought*, as German thinkers are, would adopt and prosecute a course which might lead to *idealism*. This, indeed, took place. When the celebrated philosopher of Königsberg, Immanuel Kant, roused by a desire to annihilate the scepticism of Hume, undertook the task of explaining the nature and origin of the whole system of *human knowledge*, he was led to investigate very closely the intellectual being of man, that he might ascertain the character of human belief. He divides our intellectual nature into *three* distinct faculties,—*sensation*, *understanding*, and *reason*. From *sensation*, according to him, we derive the whole *matter* of our knowledge; from *understanding*, its *form*, or the manner in which it is conceived of by us; and from *reason* we derive certain general or *abstract notions* or *ideas*, which give a systematic unity to human thought, but have no such *objective reality* as can be scientifically demonstrated. There is, therefore, a radical distinction between the *subject* and the *object*—between the mind which thinks, and the matter of its thought. The *matter* comes from without, the *form* from within; and the senses are the channels through which the phenomena of

they mean by the *laws of matter*? When we use the term law with proper relation to *mind*, we must mean "some mode of designed and conscious action," for the ultimate idea of the mind is *voluntary agency*. But the ultimate idea of matter is *vis inertia*, or *absolute rest*. Or if men assume the notion of some *physical force*, still they regard it as *latent force*, till roused by juxtaposition or combination. The term *law*, therefore, can be applied to *matter* only as a convenient expression for intimating some *generalized condition* of material being, but not as intimating essential activity, far less spontaneous energy. If there were nothing in the universe but matter and its laws, there could be nothing but *universal and unconscious quiescence*—no God, no motion, no life, no thought,—nothing but blank, everlasting oblivion.

nature are poured into the mould of the human mind. It follows, necessarily, that knowledge is possible only by the concurrent action both of the *object* and of the *subject*; and it *seems* to follow, that we know the essence of neither, but only their relation, and that all our knowledge may be regarded as purely phenomenal, relative, and subjective.

What, then, has *reason* to do in human knowledge? By means of *reason* we are capable of forming certain grand *ideas*, such as that of God, the universe, and the soul; but these may be the mere personifications of our own modes of thinking, and may have no such objective reality as can be scientifically demonstrated. This has been regarded as the flaw in Kant's philosophy; but, with some deference, we venture to think, that he has not been adequately understood in this part of his system. He holds, indeed, the "speculative reason," as he terms it, to be incompetent to prove the existence of God; but he appeals to what he calls "the practical reason," and in the conscious liberty of the soul, and its sense of incumbent moral duty,—"the categorical imperative,"—he finds materials for reconstructing the basis and fabric of a true theology—a theology, weak indeed and defectively imperfect, compared with revelation, but not necessarily opposed to any doctrine of revealed truth.

It is not easy, perhaps scarcely possible, for any mind to take in fully the philosophic system of any other mind, and to perceive aright its entire scope and the balanced interdependence of all its parts, especially when that system is not only comprehensive and profound, but also expressed in a peculiarly obscure and difficult terminology. Each man is apt to seize and take away with him that which he most readily apprehends, leaving the rest behind him as unintelligible. So has it fared with Kant's philosophy. It was easy to perceive that great importance was attached to the *subjective* in his system; and it was rashly assumed that comparatively little regard was due to the *objective*, while the sphere of reason was exalted into transcendental supremacy over both. But as reason did not pretend to do more than produce what were termed the *ideal truths of pure reason*, which were necessarily true, whether there were any corresponding objective reality or not, its views might be drawn into apparent harmony with the subjective, and be employed to aid in reducing the value of the objective. It was precisely at this point that Fichte introduced his theory. His argument was to this effect: "Since, as Kant has taught, all objects are conceived of either according to the *forms* of our *sensational faculty*, or the *categories* of our *understanding*, or the *ideas of pure reason*, it seems unnecessary to suppose the existence of any object distinct from the mind itself. For if it be the mind that furnishes the *form of space*, and gives us the *idea of substance*, of *cause*, of *being*, the mind alone might suffice for the whole sum of human knowledge. Fichte was followed by Schelling, and Schelling by Hegel, each differing considerably from his predecessor, but all concurring

in the attempt to represent everything in the universe as a mere *mode* or *manifestation* of one infinite essence. The fundamental principle of Hegel's doctrine is the *identity of being and thought*. With him, *being* and the *idea of being* are the same ; and being and thought are combined in the "absolute," which is at once *ideal* and *réal*. With him, the idea of God is that of a *logical process of thought*, "ever unfolding itself, but never unfolded,"—a dialectical movement rather than a divine being, which realizes itself, and reaches a state of self-consciousness, in man. God, nature, and man are but one process of thought, considered in different aspects ; all infinite personalities are only so many thoughts of our eternal mind ; God is in man, and man is in God ; and the progress of humanity in all its stages is a divine development. Such is the sum of Hegelian idealistic pantheism.

It will easily be seen that this, so far as it is in any manner intelligible, is the theory hinted at by Ralph Waldo Emerson in several of his writings, particularly in his *Representative Men*, which, notwithstanding many beauties of style, is, after all, essentially a disguised plagiarism. It is identical also with the dogmas, for a time somewhat obscurely intimated, and at last boldly uttered, by Thomas Carlyle, in his *Life of Stirling*. Theories as nearly identical as their authors can make them, are frequently produced in the *Westminster Review*, and by several avowed Socinian authors, both in this country and in America. It is all the more necessary, that in a course of apologetic or defensive theology we should look them fairly and boldly in the face, test their nature and value, and repel them.

It will, I trust, have been noticed that this pantheism of the idealistic form, though having a relation to the philosophy of Kant, is not fairly founded on, or deduced from, that philosophy. It leaves out of sight entirely Kant's appeal to the *moral nature of man*, on which he placed the foundation of his theology. It attaches also far more importance to the subjective, and far less to the objective, than he did. In reality, it attaches no value to the objective at all. According to it, the mind is not informed or instructed by the universe, but the universe is produced by the mind ; the objective is developed from the subjective ; and there is no reality anywhere, except in the region of consciousness. Nature is seen only as it is imaged in the mirror within ; and to us it is a mere phantasmagoria,—a series of phenomena,—a succession of thoughts. Whatever, therefore, be the merit or demerit of Kant's system, it is not justly chargeable with having directly produced the idealistic pantheism of Fichte and his followers. Further, let it be well observed that the theory, as Hegel produced it, contains the elements of its own confutation. His idea of God, as already stated, "is that of a logical process of thought, which reaches a state of self-consciousness in man." "God is in man, and man is in God." Before uttering this daringly impious dogma, and at the close of the lecture, the "logical process" of which preceded it, Hegel said to his students,

"To-morrow, gentlemen, I shall produce God"—and the result was the statement of the above dogma. But what does it mean? In that ultimate self-consciousness, is there the "absolute identity of being and thought?" Does God know Himself to be man, and man know himself to be God? This must be the case, if Hegel's philosophy be true; and we fearlessly appeal to the self-consciousness of any man, and of every man, if he ever actually believed himself, nay, knew himself, to be God!

Not even Hegel himself, in the highest of his transcendental Icarian flights, would have been so audaciously impious as to have answered that he did. The appeal to human self-consciousness will therefore be for ever a direct and conclusive refutation of this extreme form of idealistic pantheism. And the Hegelian cannot refuse this appeal, because this same self-consciousness is the basis and the pervading essence of his entire idealistic theory.

But we have something more to do with man's self-consciousness before we close our investigation. We have already directed attention to the significant fact, that Kant sought and found the basis of his theology in the region of the "practical reason," in the conscious liberty of the soul, and in its sense of incumbent moral duty,—that is, as we would say, quitting his phraseology, and using terms with which we are more familiar, *in the region of conscience*. Profound and calm, even cold, as was Kant's intellectual nature, it was also comprehensive and honest. He perceived clearly enough that there was more in man than could be included within the terms sensation, understanding, and reason,—that there was the region of morality, duty, responsibility; and though tenacious of his peculiar phraseology, he yet thought it right to invent a term which might designate that region. Hence the term "practical reason," employed to indicate a faculty of the mind, which has to do with human action, especially in the social state, and which has, as its own special forms or categories, the necessary ideas of free agency and responsibility,—the *will* and the *conscience* of man. Every one will see the value to Natural Theology of this concession. Every one will see also, that it is in perfect harmony, so far as it goes, with the manner in which revelation appeals to conscience. But every one may also see, that it is fatal to idealistic pantheism, by not only drawing an absolute distinction between God and man, but also by placing that distinction in man's subordinate responsibility.

There is, besides, a most important topic pervading the whole moral region, to which Kant makes no reference, but to which we proceed to direct special attention. The moral faculty, even when viewed merely in its scientific aspect, has its own special forms of thought, or laws, peculiar to itself. It not only views moral action, but it pronounces a moral judgment on all voluntary action. It terms them good or bad, right or wrong; and it expresses, regarding the agents, approbation or disapprobation. It asserts the sove-

reign claims of justice, truth, rectitude, benevolence, purity, propriety. It condemns the violation or neglect of these social virtues; and when its remonstrances are disregarded, it appeals to a future state, and to the judgment-seat of God. This *ought* to secure the constant reign of principles which all men admit, under the guardianship and enforcement of conscience, the duty of obedience to which no man denies. But it does not. How is this? Physical nature has its laws, and these are universally obeyed. Intellect has its laws of thought, and these produce a universal consent in all truly scientific thinking. The moral faculty has also its laws, under the sense of duty to God, but these are disobeyed. All other principles and powers act within their sphere, and consistently with their nature; the moral nature does not. In this man wanders from his sphere, rebels against the law of his nature,—in one word, *sins*. Can pantheism account for *sin*?

Let the materialistic pantheist attempt an answer to this question. He need not attempt to deny the fact, for it welters deep and dark around him in the vice, immorality, and wretchedness which disfigure society everywhere throughout the world. Yet it is seen only in the moral region of the human race. He need not attempt evasive replies, by reference to storms, earthquakes, volcanoes, and other physical disturbances and convulsions; for in none of these can be traced the element of remorse, and physical or merely animal and irrational nature has no moral region—no conscience. There is something here, then—a very terrible something—which mere materialistic pantheism can neither deny nor explain,—something which mere matter knows not, and cannot know,—something which seems to groan out and shriek aloud the confession, that *God is*, and that *man is*,—that God is a *just and holy God*, and that man is a *guilty and miserable sinner*.

Let the idealistic pantheist try what answer he can give. If he assert that man's self-consciousness is *developed deity*, we ask him whence comes the idea of *sin*? He cannot deny either the terrible idea, for man's consciousness shudderingly acknowledges its reality and truth, or the hideous reality, for it is writhing in its misery around him, and howling its anguish in his ears. It is neither *extension* nor *thought*. It cannot be his ideal god. It is *man*, who has separated himself from God, sinned against God, is at enmity against God,—and can never, never more be at peace and in happiness, till he has been again consciously reconciled to God, and knows and feels that God has forgiven him, and removed from him that guilt which caused his misery.

Thus it may be proved, by attending to the moral nature of man, and marking specially the awful fact of *sin*, the existence of which in the vice, immorality, crime, and misery of human society, no man, however wilfully blind, can deny, that pantheism is an utterly impossible hypothesis, alike in its materialistic and its idealistic forms.

This we regard as not only an absolute and a very terrible refutation of pantheism, but also a very solemn proof that there is an infinitely righteous and holy God, the Governor and Judge of all the earth, to whose existence and attributes the moral faculty of man, and even the dead reality of moral evil and its consequences and fears, unite in bearing constant and incontestable witness. This method of refuting pantheism may be accepted as absolutely and for ever conclusive.

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ERRATA.

Page 26, lines 8 and 18 from top, in syllogisms II. and III., transfer the clauses in the middle terms commencing "If there be," to the first terms.

- „ 167, line 3 from bottom, *for* 'eats,' *read* 'cuts.'
- „ 187, line 6 from top, *for* 'Kueph,' *read* 'Kneph.'
- „ 214, line 6 from bottom, *for* 'area,' *read* 'arena.'
- „ 340, first line, *for* 'humble,' *read* 'humbled.'
- „ 433, last line, *for* 'lecture,' *read* 'section.'
- „ 533, last line, *for* 'vol. i. p. 8,' *read* 'vol. i. p. 83.'

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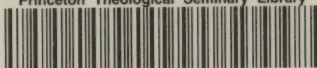
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